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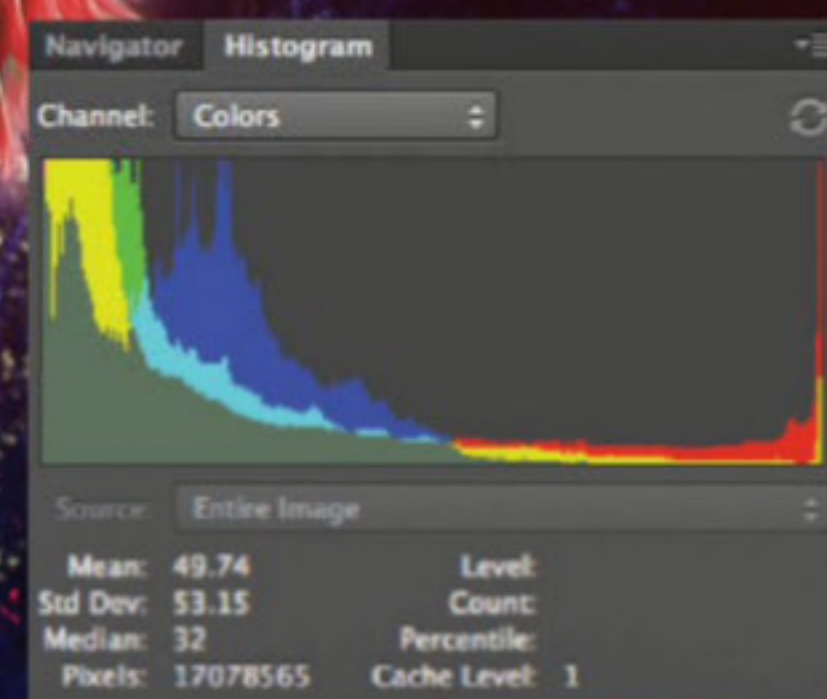
HOT NEW
CC
TOOLS

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and the new CC apps

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ISSUE 134

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INK & SLIDE

Will Adobe's first ever hardware transform the way you work?

■ CONCEPT ART TIPS

ARCH-VIS

The pro skills you need to paint incredible buildings

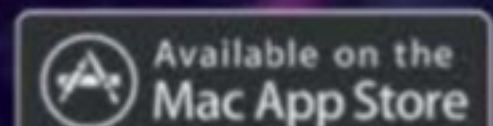




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ISSUE 134 WELCOME



Welcome to the latest issue of **Advanced Photoshop**. This issue we take a look at what a lot of people think of as Photoshop's most complicated tools: those that deal with colour.

APRIL MADDEN
Editor

IN THIS ISSUE:

- COLOUR CONTROL
- CC APPS
- PHOTOMANIPULATION
- DIGITAL PAINTING
- ARCH-VIS

COVER IMAGE

MOE PIKE SOE
www.be.net/moepike

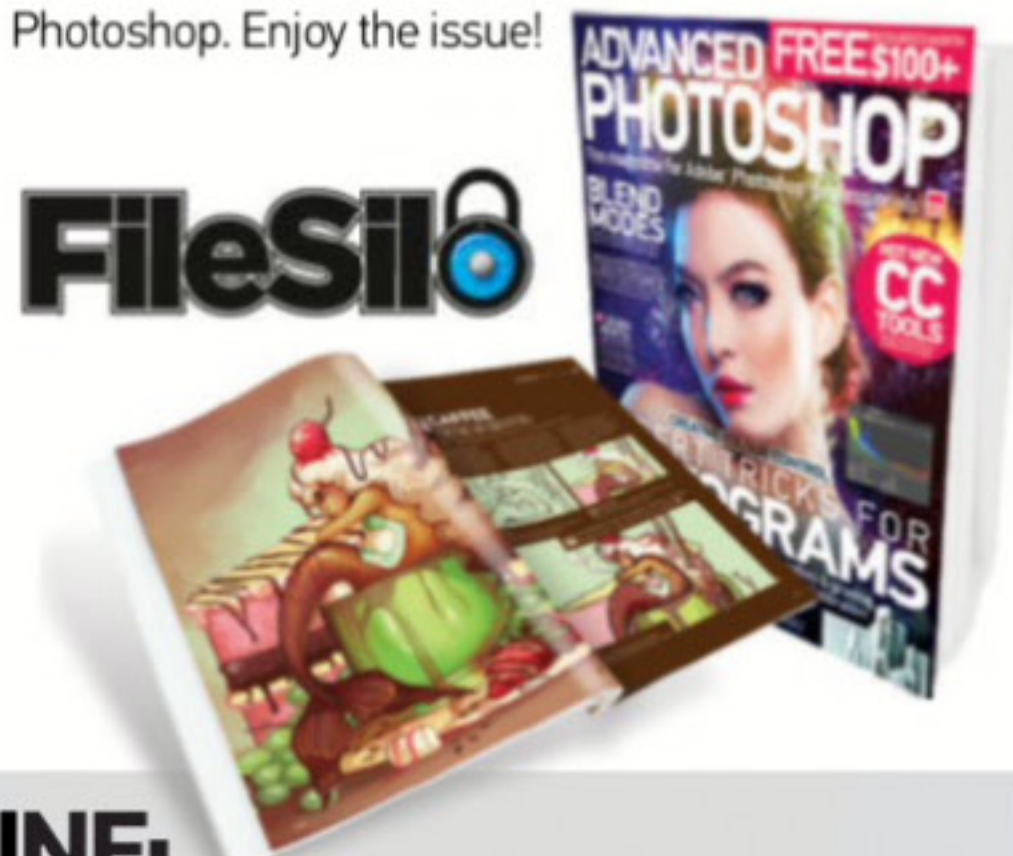
Moe Pike Soe is a 22-year-old self-taught digital artist and designer from Yangon, Myanmar. He is currently working as a freelance graphic designer while extending his knowledge at Parsons the New School of Design.



This issue we've got a selection of expert tips from Photoshop professionals to teach you the tricks you need to know for brighter, more vibrant images. Master colour profiles, histograms and much more, on p28.

We also take a look at some of the hot new CC tools you can use to enhance your workflow. On p44, artist Paul Scott Canavan walks you through the new Adobe CC apps and how you can use them with Photoshop to capture assets and create a unique digital painting. Meanwhile on p54, Brandon Cawood gets to grips with the Render Flame filter and uses it to create a smoking hot composite.

We also got our hands on Adobe's Ink & Slide, which is now available in the the UK. Find out what we thought of Adobe's first foray into hardware design and whether it's got our recommendation on p82. Plus this issue is packed with info and advice from creative pros to help you get the most from Photoshop. Enjoy the issue!



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12 | PORTFOLIO INTERVIEW: ART WITH CHARACTER

Piper Thibodeau is well known for her long-running daily painting project. We find out more



64 | WORKSHOP: PAINT CONCEPT ART FOR ARCH-VIS

Follow digital painting and sketching techniques for creating an architectural masterpiece

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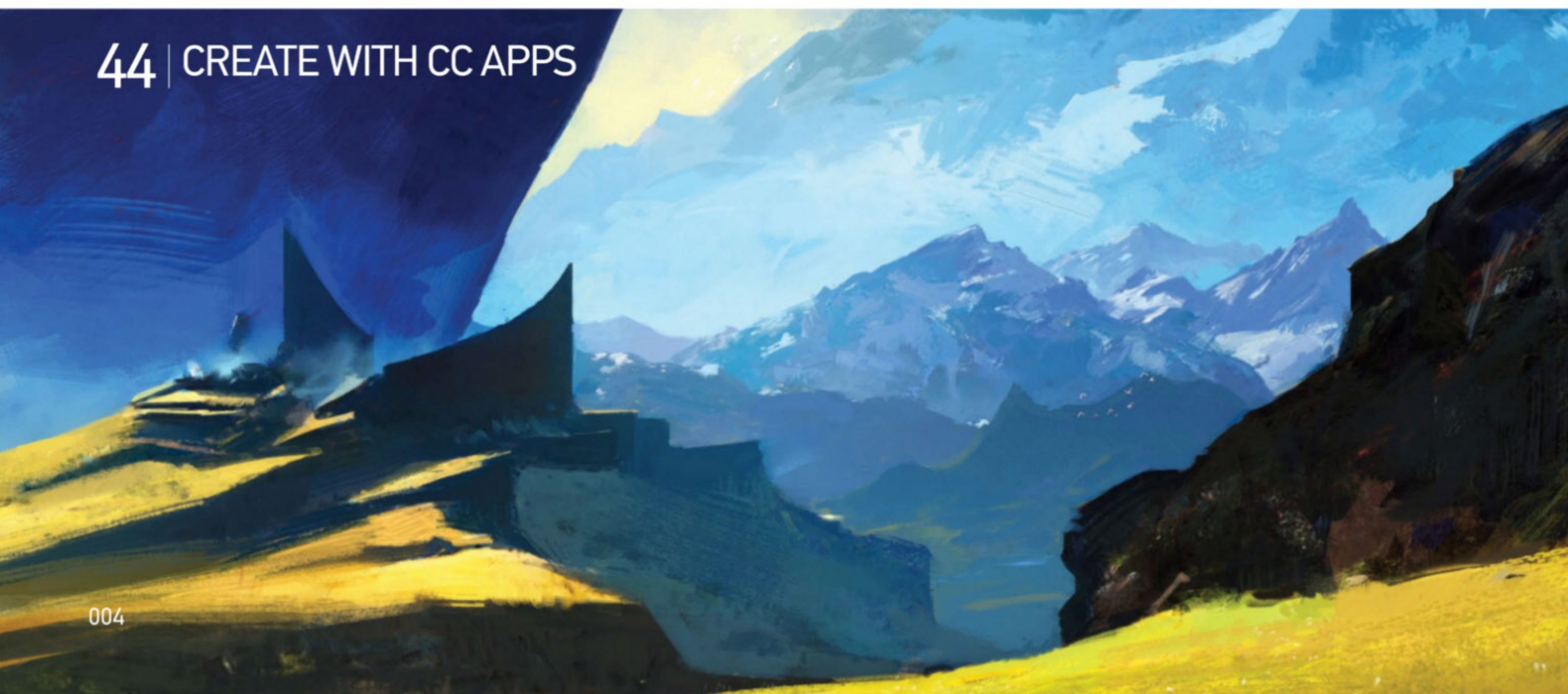
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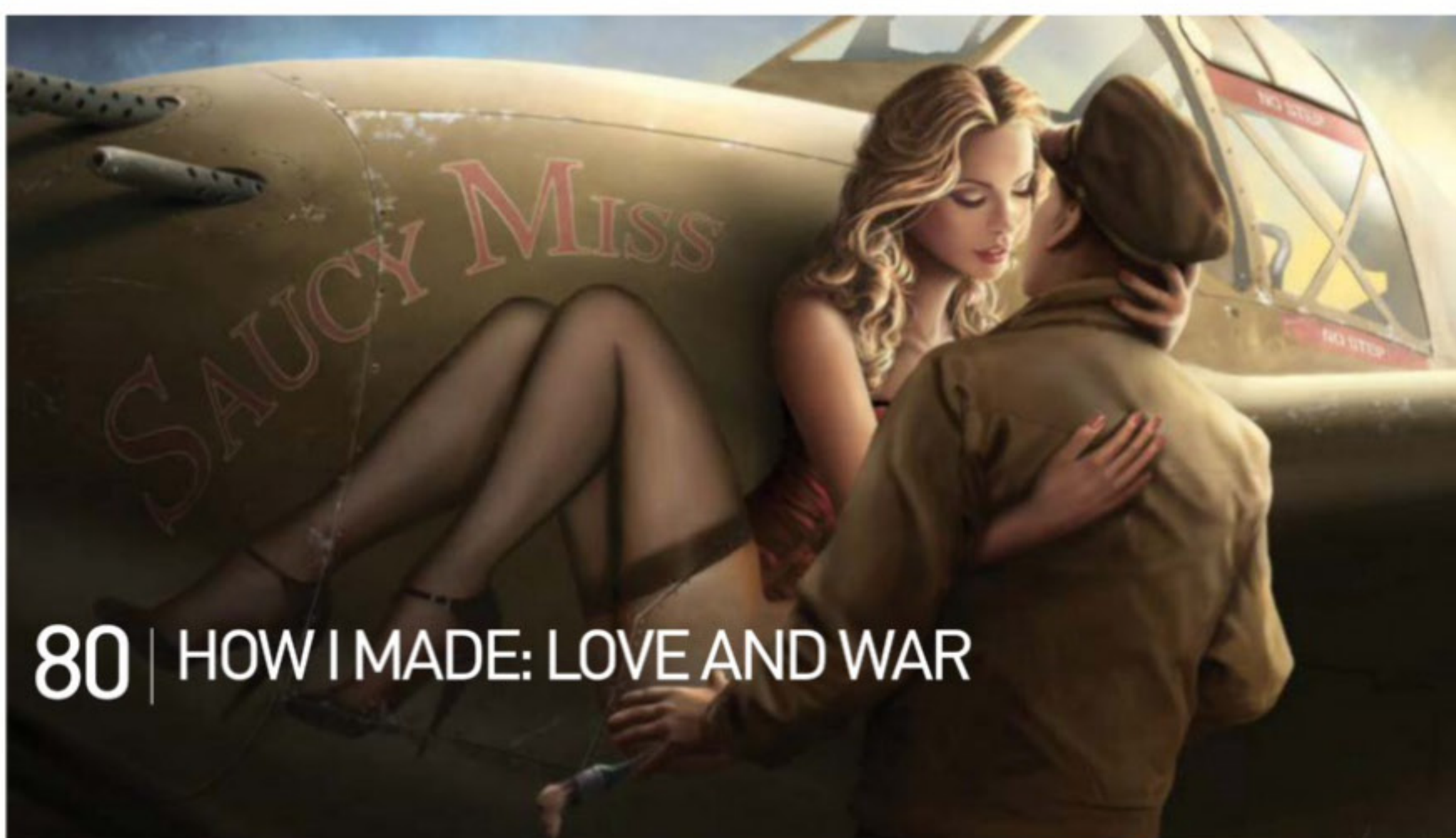
TECHNIQUES

Professional artists reveal their high-end Photoshop skills in our easy-to-follow workshops

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REVIEWS

We put the latest creative kit and apps to the test

- 80** ■ **FEATURE:**
Adobe Ink & Slide



96 RESOURCES



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from Photoshop pro, Kirk Nelson



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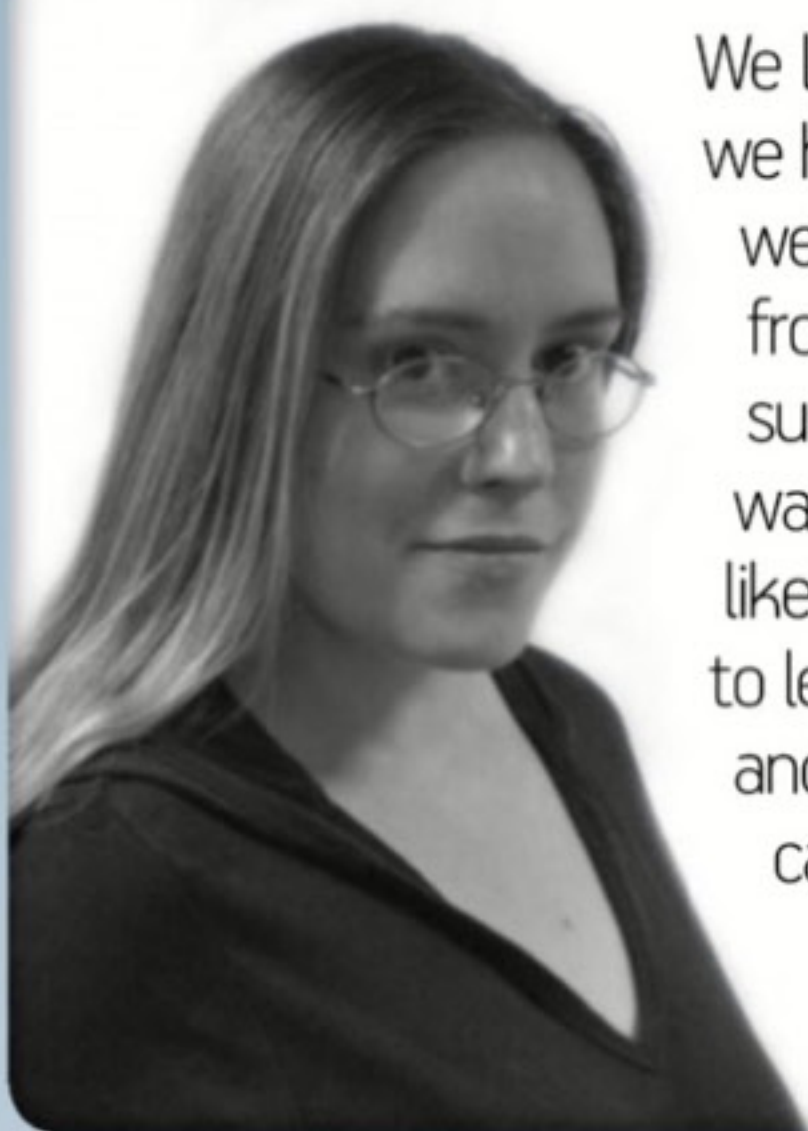


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We love creating **Advanced Photoshop** and we hope you love reading it too. That's why we're asking you to tell us what you want from your magazine. Our quick three-minute survey lets you tell us exactly what you want to see, from the kind of artwork you like to the Photoshop techniques you want to learn. Share your opinions with us today and make a difference to your magazine. We can't wait to see your thoughts!

APRIL MADDEN
Editor

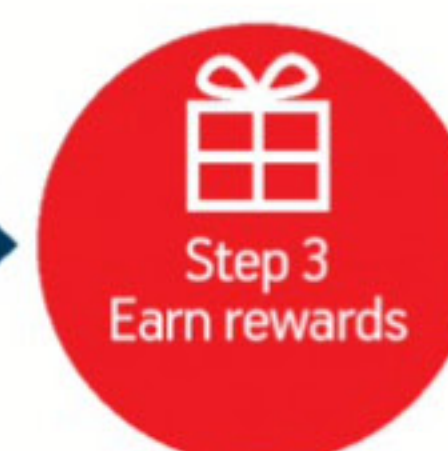


At work: The Advanced Photoshop team making the magazine look beautiful



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- Get a chance to meet the Advanced Photoshop team
- Shape the future issues of the magazine
- Enter into exclusive competitions



Planning: The Advanced Photoshop team planning future issues of the mag



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ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP® PRO PANEL

MEET THE PROFESSIONALS SHARING THEIR PHOTOSHOP
EXPERTISE AND TECHNIQUES IN THIS ISSUE

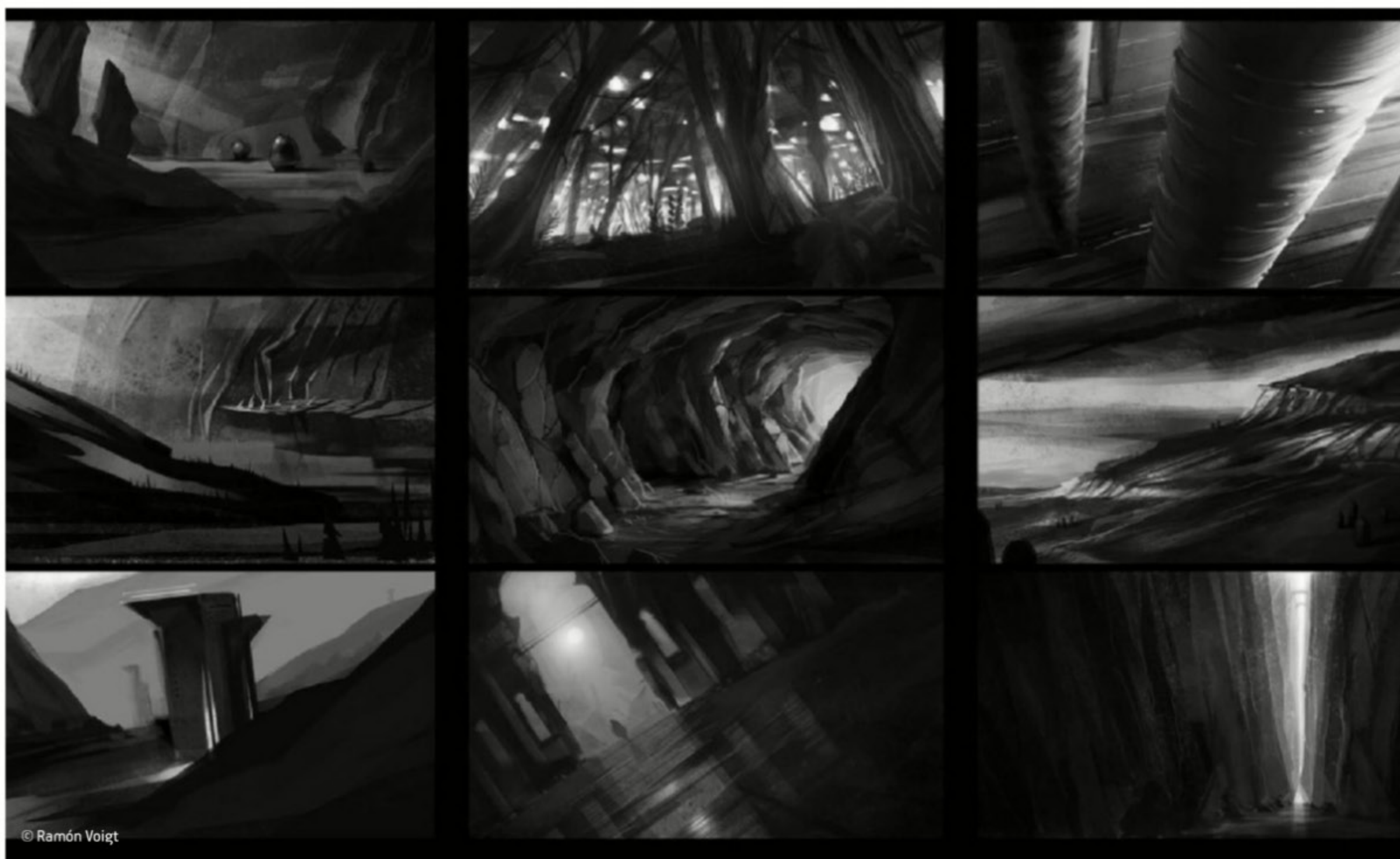


RAMÓN VOIGT

www.behance.net/rammon

Whether working for commercial projects, in the film or game industries or even in personal work, creating thumbnails in Photoshop is one great tool to push your creative output to the next level. You give yourself and the client more options, so you reach a better result faster and more efficiently. Just working in black-and-white makes you focus on the main composition and general lighting situation. Get your values straight first, and then concentrate on colour and detail.

■ Get more industry secrets from Ramón Voigt on p64 where he shares some killer techniques for arch-vis concept art



PAUL SCOTT CANAVAN

www.paulscottcanavan.com

Experimenting with
different techniques is
useful for both learning

new skills and keeping yourself engaged and excited about your work. Try pulling photographs into the sketch phase of your painting in order to add texture or inspire design concepts, for example, or create abstract shapes in Zbrush and see if you can create a landscape from them!

■ Get a complete overview of how Paul Scott Canavan creates epic landscapes in his feature on CC apps on p44





SOUFIANE IDRASSI

www.artstation.com/artist/cgsoufiane

It's a great thing to find your own style of manipulation, but it's very important that you gain experience and skill first to help you on your journey to find that special touch that represents you. Getting your own style will make your art look unique and anybody that looks at it will automatically recognise that it's yours, and that will help you get more exposure. This also applies to every art area, not just photomanipulation.

■ Learn more about how Soufiane Idrassi developed his unique style in his tutorial on p74



“Just working in black-and-white makes you focus on the main composition and general lighting situation. Get your values straight first, and then concentrate on colour and detail”

RAMÓN VOIGT / WWW.BEHANCE.NET/RAMMMON

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Imagine Publishing Ltd
Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill,
Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200

Web: www.imagine-publishing.co.uk
www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk
www.greatdigitalmags.com

Magazine team

Editor April Madden

april.madden@imagine-publishing.co.uk

☎ 01202 586218

Editor in Chief Amy Squibb

Production Editor Rebecca Greig

Designer Rebekka Hearl

Photographer James Sheppard

Senior Art Editor Duncan Crook

Publishing Director Aaron Asadi

Head of Design Ross Andrews

Contributors

Julie Bassett, Paul Scott Canavan, Brandon Cawood,
Soufiane Idrassi, Larissa Mori, Kirk Nelson, Moe Pike Soe,
Ramón Voigt and Poz Watson

Advertising

Digital or printed media packs are available on request.

Head of Sales Hang Deretz

☎ 01202 586442

hang.deretz@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Advertising Manager Alex Carnegie

☎ 01202 586430

alex.carnegie@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Sales Executive Tim Hawkins

☎ 01202 586437

tim.hawkins@imagine-publishing.co.uk

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International

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Head of International Licensing Cathy Blackman

☎ +44 (0) 1202 586401

licensing@imagine-publishing.co.uk

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Circulation

Head of Circulation Darren Pearce

☎ 01202 586200

Production

Production Director Jane Hawkins

☎ 01202 586200

Founder

Group Managing Director Damian Butt

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WACOM ANNOUNCES FOURTH NEW TABLET OF 2015

PHOTOSHOP USERS CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW TOOLS, BUT IS TOUCH ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU UPGRADE TO THE LATEST CINTIQ?

After unveiling both the flagship Cintiq 27QHD and Cintiq 27QHD touch as well as the Cintiq Companion 2 at CES earlier this year, Wacom has now announced the release of another exciting graphics tablet.

Called the Cintiq 13HD touch, the tablet is essentially a brand new version of Wacom's smallest Cintiq 13HD pen tablet, but with a whole new set of multitouch capabilities; and it looks as professional and refined as you'd expect from such a consistently well-regarded brand.

Like other Cintiqs, the new Cintiq 13HD touch has been specifically created to make users feel like they're truly drawing on paper – in part thanks to features such as the Pro Pen, 2,048 levels of pressure sensitivity, and tilt recognition. It even comes with an adjustable, detachable stand to allow any artist to draw comfortably in four settings: flat, 22-, 35-, and 50-degrees.

Similar to Wacom's other Cintiq tablets, the Cintiq 13HD touch is able to connect to both Macs and PCs for both right and left handed artists. To ensure a crisp colour quality, it's been designed

with a wide format, 13.3 inch HD LED backlit screen that can display 16.7 million colours, with a 178-degree viewing angle and 1920x1080 resolution for handling intricate imagery and graphics. Frequently used shortcut commands are then available at the user's fingertips through the Cintiq 13HD touch's four customisable and application-specific ExpressKeys™ and the Rocker Ring in the middle.

What makes this new addition to the Cintiq range truly different to other tablet choices such as Wacom's very similar pre-existing Cintiq 13HD, however, is the new multi-touch integration. This allows the user to navigate the touchscreen of the Wacom and rotate, move, and zoom into and out of an image or illustration in a simple, familiar way. The tablet is even perfectly compatible with Photoshop's new touch features.

Weighing in at just 1.2 kilograms with a fairly portable size to match, the new Cintiq 13HD touch is now available to buy on Wacom's eStore and other selected retailers for £800/\$1000. Learn more at www.wacom.com.

“What makes this new addition to the Cintiq range truly different to other tablet choices such as Wacom's Cintiq 13HD is the new multi-touch integration”

■ THE NEW CINTIQ 13HD TOUCH: TECH SPECS

Product Type: Creative pen & touch display

Size: 375 x 248 x 14mm / 14.8 x 9.8 x 0.5 in

Weight: 1.2kg

Screen Size (measured diagonally): 33.8cm / 13.3inch

Displayable colours (maximum): 16.7 million

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Viewing Angle: 178° (89°/89°) H, (89°/89°) V

Brightness: 250 cd/m2

Response Rate: 25ms

Color Gamut: 75% Adobe RGB

Pressure Levels: 2048, both pen tip and eraser

Tilt Recognition: ±60 levels

Nibs: 9 standard

Pen Box and Stand: Yes

Resolution: 5080 dpi

System Requirements

PC: Windows 8, Windows® 7 SP1 or later

Mac: OS® X 10.8 or later, Intel® processor

What's Included:

Cintiq 13HD creative pen & touch display

Cintiq adjustable stand

Pro Pen, pen case with nine replacement nibs

and nib removal tool, pen stand

Wacom 3-in-1 cable with HDMI and USB connectors

AC power adapter

Installation CD

CD-ROM with driver software

Quick start guide



This sketchbook offers pressure-sensitive controls for natural pen-on-screen feel and convenient touch-screen capabilities

© Wacom

TURNING IPADS INTO GRAPHICS TABLETS

AN IMPRESSIVE NEW APP LETS ANY IPAD WORK AS A GRAPHICS TABLET FOR A MAC, SO YOU CAN USE PHOTOSHOP ON BOTH TOGETHER

Developed by ex-Apple engineers Mate Ronge and Giovanni Donelli, Astropad is a new app that presents an exciting way to use an iPad together with a Mac as a whole interconnected workspace. After downloading Astropad on both a Mac and an iPad, all users then need to do is simply connect the iPad to the Mac – either through USB or completely wirelessly with wi-fi, for the freedom to draw from the sofa. The iPad will then be turned into a truly impressive graphics tablet.

It will be able to work with and mirror any application on the Mac's desktop at the time, with no drivers required, as well as support most styluses that have been made specifically to work with iPads. This means that with Astropad, any Photoshop user will be able to create work with the full version of Photoshop on their iPad, and use



© Apple

all the iPad's functionality to pinch, zoom, or pan while doing it.

A new technology Ronge and Donelli have called LIQUID ensures the iPad stays true to the original source with colour corrected output and Retina resolution so that it exactly matches what a user can see on the Mac connected to it. LIQUID also helps

create better responsiveness, with network technology that lets the system keep up even when an artist is drawing on the iPad wirelessly.

Astropad for Mac is available now for \$49.99, or \$19.99 for academic users. The iPad app is free in the App Store. Learn more or start a seven-day free trial at www.astropad.com.

AFFINITY PHOTO BETA AVAILABLE FOR FREE DOWNLOAD

SERIF HAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THAT ITS PROFESSIONAL IMAGE EDITING APP FOR MAC, AFFINITY PHOTO, IS NOW AVAILABLE AS A FREE DOWNLOAD FOR PUBLIC BETA TESTING

"We're delighted to be shaking things up with this exciting new app that doesn't compromise on power and could make creative pros fall in love with photo editing and raster art all over again," explains Ashley Hewson, Serif's managing director.

The creative app development company recently made headlines when they achieved App of the Year at Apple's Best of 2014 awards for Affinity Designer and Affinity Photo – which the team have now made available to download for free as a first beta version for the public to test. Although still a beta, the Affinity Photo image editor is already feature-rich, boasting some really professional touches such as end-to-end CMYK, 16-bits per channel editing, LAB colour, RAW processing, ICC colour management, and Photoshop and 64-bit plug-in compatibility. Other features include pro photography adjustments like Frequency Separation editing, live blend modes, inpainting, and advanced retouching, as well as lossless editing to scale, crop, and blur while still maintaining the original image quality.

"We directly targeted professionals when we dreamt up the Affinity range, making performance, reliability, pro-level tools and a slick workflow our top priorities," added Tony Brightman, head of Affinity development. "It's early days for the Affinity Photo beta, but with the welcome help of our professional users during the test phase we'll be able to fully deliver on these aims for launch and with free updates afterwards. I'm also very happy to



say to all photographers and creatives, when Affinity Photo launches it'll be a one-time purchase – we don't do subscriptions."

You can download the free beta version of Affinity Photo to try now at affinity.serif.com/photo. After

launch, Serif has said that Affinity Photo will be available exclusively through the Mac App Store for a one off charge of £39.99/\$49.99 (subject to App Store matrix adjustments) with no ongoing subscription charges in sight.



www.piperthibodeau.com

ART WITH CHARACTER

PIPER THIBODEAU IS WELL KNOWN FOR HER LONG-RUNNING DAILY PAINTING PROJECT. WE CAUGHT UP WITH HER TO TALK CHARACTER DESIGN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CHALLENGING YOURSELF

Every day, the denizens of deviantART wait eagerly for the latest update from user CryptidCreations, aka character designer Piper Thibodeau. For over two years, Thibodeau, whose clients include Nickelodeon, Intel and CGMA, has completed a self-imposed daily challenge – to create a painting before midnight. The resulting images are prime examples of the character designer's art – full of life and character despite – or perhaps because of – their swift execution. We caught up with Piper Thibodeau to talk Photoshop, the fundamentals of character design and what that self-imposed Daily Painting project has done to improve her work.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST START CREATING YOUR OWN ARTWORK?

I've been a chronic doodler ever since I could remember – though I only began to take art seriously in my mid-teens. As a really young kid, I had an unhealthy obsession with doodling creatures after being influenced by cartoons like *The Land Before Time* and *Digimon*. Because of this, instead of paying attention in school, I would fill the outer layers of my work-sheets to the brim with imaginary monsters and battle stats (which resulted in a lot of flustered

teacher's notes being sent back home). Once I learnt about them, I yearned for a drawing tablet and Photoshop for many years – I had banked on it being the magical solution to making my art better. But fast-forward to my 15th birthday, when I acquired both, I was sorely disappointed to learn that tablets don't do miracles. The device soon collected dust.

It wasn't until I saw another student's (Valerie Lim) digital artwork on my homeroom wall that I regained interest in using Photoshop – I contacted her and we became fast friends. She showed me the ropes of drawing digitally and motivated me to keep at it. Thanks to her, I've really learnt to love the medium. I use Photoshop CC exclusively for my digital artwork now. It's very convenient to be able to finish the majority of the work in one program.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE TOOLS TO USE IN PHOTOSHOP AND WHY?

My favourites have got to be the Adjustment tools (colours, Curves, filters). I honestly can't count how many times I've run into situations where I regretted a colour choice and had these tools save my behind. I've also (embarrassingly) discovered how to use the masking tools as of late. It's been making my process a lot easier!

WHAT WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS YOU LEARNED DURING YOUR EARLY YEARS OF IMAGE MAKING?

The single most important lesson I've learnt is not to be discouraged by failure. You come to discover that the most exciting part of this craft involves reflecting on your improvements – sure it can be frustrating at times, but the pay off is so worth it. Five years from now, I eagerly look forward to scoffing at all the mistakes I'm currently making!

Another major lesson I learnt is to find a healthy balance when it comes to comparing your art to others, which can quickly become toxic. As a student or professional, you should set a bar of quality for yourself based on the work of others, but you've crossed the line when it turns into a source of stress and envy rather than inspiration.

More practically, in recent years Photoshop has implemented an auto-save feature, but you should always rely on your own saves first!

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT CREATING A CHARACTER?

I'll start with brainstorming a topic. If I can't think of anything interesting, I might browse the twitter handle @sketch_dailies or Google various creatures

Daily Painting 756# Kanto, Eeveelutions: "An excerpt from the Pokemon re-designs I had been infrequently working on for the past year. I've nearly finished all 151 of the originals"



“ I use Photoshop CC exclusively for my digital artwork now. It’s very convenient to be able to finish the majority of the work in one program ”



Daily Painting 830# Sushi Party: I was having sushi at the time and it influenced me to create a bountiful array of cutesified soul-staring sushi rolls



Sidhe Cats: The faerie cats from my upcoming short film *Sidhe*. They carry staffs adorned with the skulls of mice and can dissolve into smoke when spotted by a human

All images © Piper Thibodeau



Intel's Pocket Avatars, Potoo Model Sheet: "I was hired by Intel to work on this cool messaging app called Pocket Avatars. The Potoo was the first design I did for the app"



Insomniganza Challenge 12/20: "I felt that I was neglecting full paintings in favour of characters on a white background. I decided to create a challenge for myself to create 20 paintings in 48 hours"

“ You’ve got to be able to break down your character into basic shapes. Visualising the character with too much ‘noise’, like colours and extra details, will just complicate the process ”



Daily Painting 836# Fox in Socks: Topic derived from @Sketch_Dailies. A fox playing with some socks – very loosely based on the book by Dr. Seuss



Dundundundundun.....: A modified daily that I had turned into a business card for a class assignment. Initially, there was no Jaws or deep water

and myths. Once that's figured out, I'll start compiling a reference library based on the topic. I keep this in a separate window while drawing.

From there, I'll start off with some extremely rough scribbly doodles. And after settling on one, I'll lower the opacity of the sketch and re-draw the design, sometimes more than once, until it's satisfactory. After this point it's just a matter of rendering.

WHAT ARE YOUR TIPS FOR REPRODUCING A CHARACTER DESIGN CONSISTENTLY ACROSS MULTIPLE IMAGES?

You've got to be able to break down your character into basic shapes. Visualising the character with too much 'noise' (colours, extra details) will just complicate the process for most people. It's always very useful to have a model sheet of the character handy. Having both a shape breakdown version and a detailed one is even better.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS A CHARACTER ARTIST SHOULD WORK ON?

Personally, the worst rut to be in with character design is when you're limited on what you can draw. A solid understanding of the fundamentals of anatomy, perspective, and colour will bring so much more life and variety into your work. It's something that I'm working on improving myself.

When it comes to drawing the character in different poses: facial expressions are great, but there's more to acting than just a face. It's really no different than animation: tell the story through the body and posture; the face is secondary. It wouldn't hurt to practice acting like animators do; study it through film or perhaps even taking an improv class.

WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF CHARACTER DESIGN?

I think the biggest challenge is keeping things fresh and original. There are countless designs out there and you want to be sure that you don't indirectly take too much influence from them.

You also don't want to get too repetitive with your designs either. I've unfortunately caught myself doing so lately – I'll have repeated a pose or the colour palette will be too similar.

WHY DID YOU START THE DAILY PAINTINGS?

I was influenced during my second year of college to try them after a fellow student had done a 365-day challenge. Her work improved quite a bit and it really influenced me at a particularly low period in my art journey.

My inconsistent work ethic was really put to the test when I got swamped with school deadlines. As a result, I put off drawing for a few months and was greatly disturbed to realise I lost most of my abilities during that break. Forcing myself into a routine was my only hope and it really dug me out of my slump.



Heffalumps & Woozles: An illustrative re-design of Winnie the Pooh and a menacing Heffalump. It was done to participate in the @Sketch_Dailies challenge for the day

HOW HAS PRODUCING A DAILY PAINTING HELPED YOU TO DEVELOP YOUR WORK?

It's improved my work ethic tenfold! The challenge was set up to tackle my issue with deadlines: either I submit a painting before midnight, or the daily counter would go back to day one (save for any serious emergencies). I could barely get past ten days the first few times, but now I've been going 847 days straight and I no longer struggle with meeting harsh deadlines. Aside from that, I feel that daily painting has given me more drive and ambition to improve myself.

HOW LONG DOES A DAILY PAINTING TYPICALLY TAKE?

The time I spend on a painting really depends on the complexity of the subject and how much free time I'd have on that particular day. When I started the challenge, the average was about 30 minutes. But now, since I tend to render more, it tends to be about an hour.

TELL US ABOUT THE SHORT FILM PROJECT, SIDHE, THAT YOU'RE WORKING ON?

Sidhe is a thesis film that I'm working on for my final year at Dawson College. The story is about a young falconer boy who experiences the five stages of grief following the loss of his bird – to then have its body whisked away by a ghostly black cat. It's going to be a 2D/3D hybrid film and my first foray into the medium, which I'm very excited about. I'm aiming to post it online sometime around September [2015].

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP THE CHARACTERS AND DESIGNS FOR THE FILM?

The film started off with a random concept of a black cat with glowing blue eyes and a tail like smoke. I was very fond of the idea visually and later pinned down a story in which I could use these creatures as a plot device. I was influenced by the forests and creatures from the film *Princess Mononoke* – I really loved the creepy yet alluring vibe they had. And it really served as a good visual guide for what I wanted to achieve.

► **WHICH OF YOUR IMAGES ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF, AND WHY?**

I'd say at the present, I'm quite happy with the Wolf in Sheep's Clothing piece. In a critique I received from the CTN Expo this year, I was told to include more character interactions in my pieces, and I think this is one of the few recent artworks to really exercise that. It's kind of an early 2015 benchmark for myself: I want to create more artwork that tells a story rather than a character with a default pose.

WHAT ARE YOUR PROFESSIONAL AMBITIONS AS AN ARTIST?

I'm VERY interested in working in the TV animation industry. I'd say that it's my goal at the moment, professionally. Recently, I've had a couple of freelance gigs that involved that industry. I got to work on something for Nickelodeon Junior and on a pitch for a major network. I adore freelancing, but I would like to give working in a studio a shot at least.

YOU SHOW WORK ON PATREON – WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE MORE ARTISTS TO USE IT?

I don't want to stop making daily paintings, though I

“Facial expressions are great, but there's more to acting than just a face. Tell the story through the body and posture; the face is secondary”

do fear the possibility of having to sideline it because of difficulties making ends meet. While I'm not dependant on Patreon for funds, I very much appreciate the support and I feel like it's also made me more conscious of the quality of work I produce. I don't want to rip people off, so I put in extra effort – which is a win-win!

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU AND YOUR ART CAREER?

Improvement is my biggest goal at the moment. I feel as though I'm getting too repetitive and I want to broaden the area of subjects that I can cover. As mentioned before, fundamentals is something I'm taking a focus on, and I'm very confident that my art will vary significantly after building a sturdier foundation to my studies. For 2015, I'm aiming for more human designs, realistic monsters, and painted environments.

PORTFOLIO TIPS

PIPER THIBODEAU'S TOP TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR CHARACTER DESIGN PORTFOLIO

■ **KEEP YOUR PORTFOLIO CONSISTENT**

It's generally a good idea to have a consistent theme in your portfolio. For example, try adapting an old fairy tale: give it your own twist and base your characters, environments and concept art on it. It'll demonstrate that you can work within limitation (and it's a lot more interesting than stray pieces: it tells a story).

■ **FOCUS ON YOUR GOALS**

Keep your work varied but not too irrelevant. If you're a character designer, it would be best to showcase your talents in that area and not, let's say, storyboards. Not that you can't be a storyboard artist either, but you have to cater to the employment you're aiming for.

■ **MAKE SURE CHARACTERS INTERACT**

For character artist portfolios, be sure to have multiple interactions in there. Characters are scarcely seen on their own in TV shows or features.

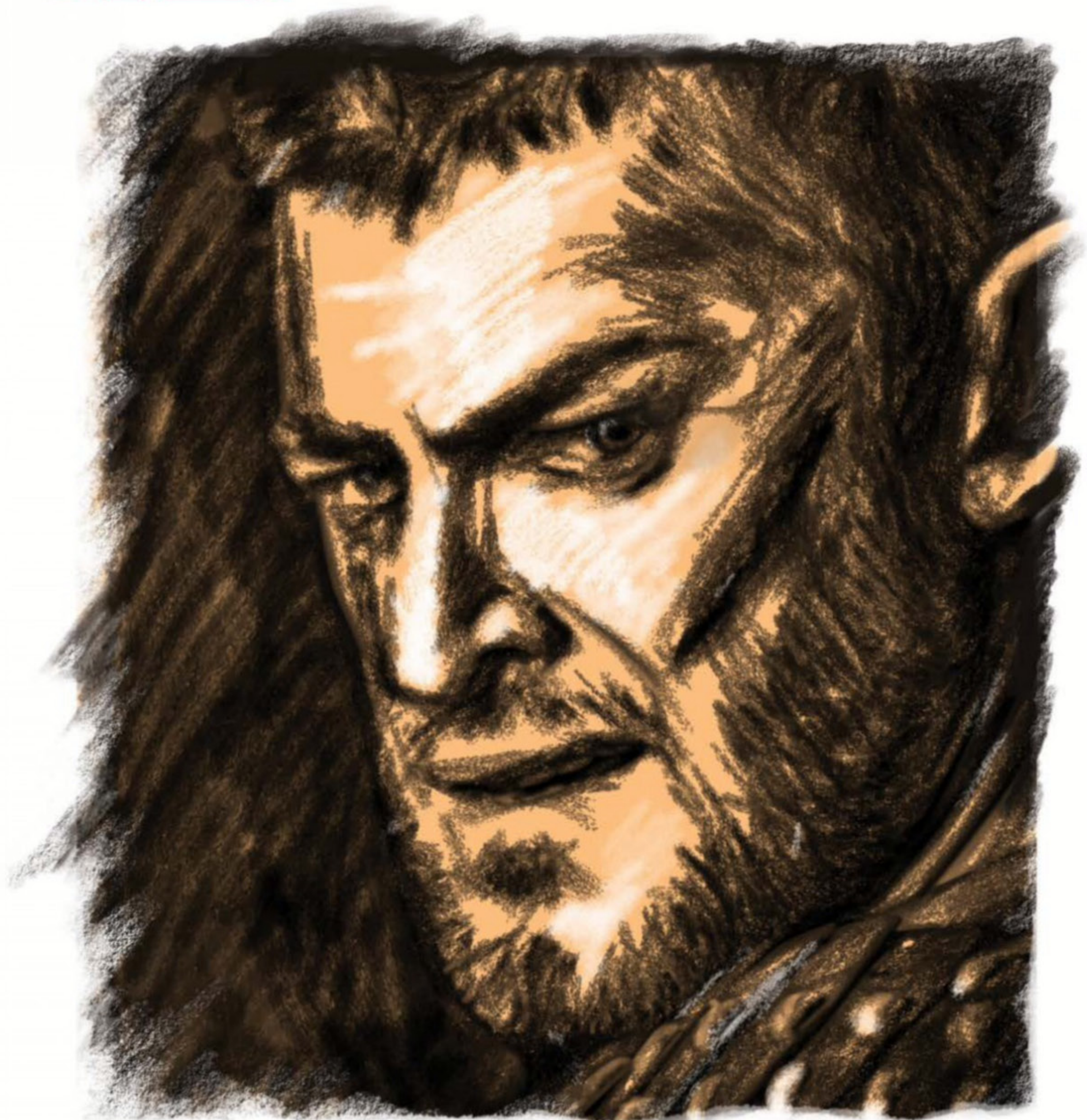
Daily Painting 787# Sheep's Clothing:
“One of my favourites for the early 2015 year: a wolf in sheep's clothing trying to fit into a suspicious flock”





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CREATIVE TOOLS FOR CREATIVE PEOPLE

BOX BRANDING FOR JAF TEA

ANDREW GUSEV AND DMITRY ANASHKIN REVEAL HOW THEY COMBINED THEIR 3D AND PHOTOSHOP SKILLS TO CREATE A BRAND NEW BOX DESIGN FOR A TEA COMPANY

ABOUT THE ARTIST

ANDREW GUSEV AND
DMITRY ANASHKIN

2andreich.com, www.3dima.ru



Andrew Gusev is a creative director and digital artist specialising in exclusive websites, computer graphics, post-production, photomanipulation, 3D graphics, and animation. Based in Moscow, Dmitry Anashkin has been creating 3D graphics and illustrations for the past 19 years.

NAME OF PROJECT GOLD SHEEP

How do you go about illustrating a brand new box of tea? For art director Andrew Gusev, this was a question that needed to be figured out not too long ago. After working with clients including Microsoft, Nokia, Nvidia, and Panasonic, he was approached to direct the design for a unique new box of tea for Jaf Tea.

"I first asked an artist to draw sketches of the environment and sheep," Gusev begins. He then asked his co-worker on the project, 3D artist Dmitry Anashkin, to start transforming the sketched landscape into 3D CGI. The work began to be divided into two separate sections that needed to be combined together with the help of 3D software and Photoshop: the backdrop and the sheep.

Together with character designer Irina Salynkina, Gusev created the 3D model of the sheep with ZBrush before sending the sheep render to Anashkin to incorporate into his 3D landscape. "Dmitry applied the render and obtained a layered scene for post-processing," explains Gusev. Next, it was Photoshop's turn. "In Photoshop I created the background using stock images, added haze to visually separate the foreground and background, painted sheep muzzles and sheep in the foreground, and used a stock texture to add realism to [the] fleece. Finally, I did some colour correction."



All images © Andrew Gusev and Dmitry Anashkin

TELL US MORE ABOUT YOURSELF, AND HOW YOU STARTED USING PHOTOSHOP?

Andrew: I got to use Photoshop for the first time back in 2002, after I designed my first website. The customer liked my work very much and I realised that it was what I wanted to do. I started learning [about] Photoshop with any [tutorials] I could find on the internet, [while] I continued making websites at small design studios.

In 2008, I took up post-production and matte painting. It was more of a hobby, though, and web design remained my primary job.

Frankly, my first attempts with Photoshop were hideous, but I didn't give up. I watched lessons created by professionals, I continued trying, and participated in contests. Gradually, my skills improved. By 2010, I had become quite good with key illustration tools and started offering those skills alongside web design. This way, combining beautiful, high-quality illustrations and web design became my primary focus. In 2012, I started getting lots of requests for illustrations and websites, so I went freelance.

In my three years as a freelancer, I gathered up a small team of professionals to help me implement my ideas. These days, I'm more of an art director – I create ideas for our projects.

Dmitry: Back in 1997 when I was about 18, I started working on television, designing stage sets as well as ads.

During my time with several public broadcasters and media companies, I took on a variety of roles including designer, cameraman, cutter, and composer. 3D graphics was what attracted me the most, so I focused on it and took up 3ds Max, Maya, XSI, and Cinema 4D. Today I create 3D graphics for movies, illustrations, and ads. I contribute to creating ideas and scenarios. I also do some freelance work.

HOW WERE YOU FIRST APPROACHED TO MAKE AN ILLUSTRATION FOR A BOX OF TEA?

Andrew: After listening to the customer's ideas, I suggested a concept for a New Year tea gift box [based on the idea that 2015 is the Year of the Sheep in the Chinese zodiac]: on the lid is a cornucopia [that is] spouting coins, which turn to a river of gold when



The final image render



Adding detail

they fall. After bathing in that river, a regular sheep would become a golden one.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES YOU USED?

Andrew: The main Photoshop tools were brushes, [the] Eraser, [and] masks [together with] overlaying photos to create [the] background [and] colour correction. I'm not sure but I think it took me about a week [to complete]. The main challenge was [the] sheep's golden fleece, which seemed unnatural after the first few tries.

Dmitry: [The] gold sheep was created with the help of 3ds Max and V-Ray too. Everything was done from the initial sketch [to the finished design]. The image resolution was 6000 pixels; so the rendering process was very long, about 15 hours!



The final colour correction

Both 3ds Max and V-Ray were used to render the final piece. Photoshop textures have been made for many objects in this illustration

The rendering process involved in producing Gold Sheep at 6,000 pixels took 15 hours in total

Many details needed to be added with Photoshop to complete the piece, including the background, and the lambs, dog, fish and other animals, which were taken from photographs

"After looking through lots of photos of sheep, I realised they were not cute enough," explains Gusev. "I turned to lambs"

WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE FINAL DESIGN OF THE BOX A SUCCESS? WAS THE CLIENT HAPPY?

Andrew: Like with any other illustration, you like it when you're just finished. Then after a few days, you begin to think you could've done better. Anyway, Jaftea did like the result and I [have continued] working with them. Already I have a very interesting idea for 2016, the Year of the Monkey.

Dmitry: Today I can say I've improved my skills and can do better work because of the project. Plus, the customer did like my work. They even sent me a pack of tea, which was very nice of them.

WHAT WOULD YOU MOST LOVE TO SEE AS NEW TOOLS WITHIN PHOTOSHOP IN THE FUTURE?

Andrew: I absolutely loved Perspective Warp. We

need more tools like that.

Dmitry: I would like more tools to create textures for 3D models, like [those] seen in Substance Painter, for example. Hotkeys could be better though. Do people really find combinations with [Cmd/] Ctrl convenient? I have Zoom In (Out) bound to F1 and F2 and use similar hotkeys for brush size, and Flip Canvas Horizontal. Also, why is it that [Cmd/] Ctrl+Z undoes just one action?

WHERE DO THE TWO OF YOU AIM TO BE PROFESSIONALLY IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

Andrew: I'd like to be the art director of my own design studio in Russia and work with major customers from all over the world.

Dmitry: I would like to live in a country where there's no winter and continue working on interesting projects.

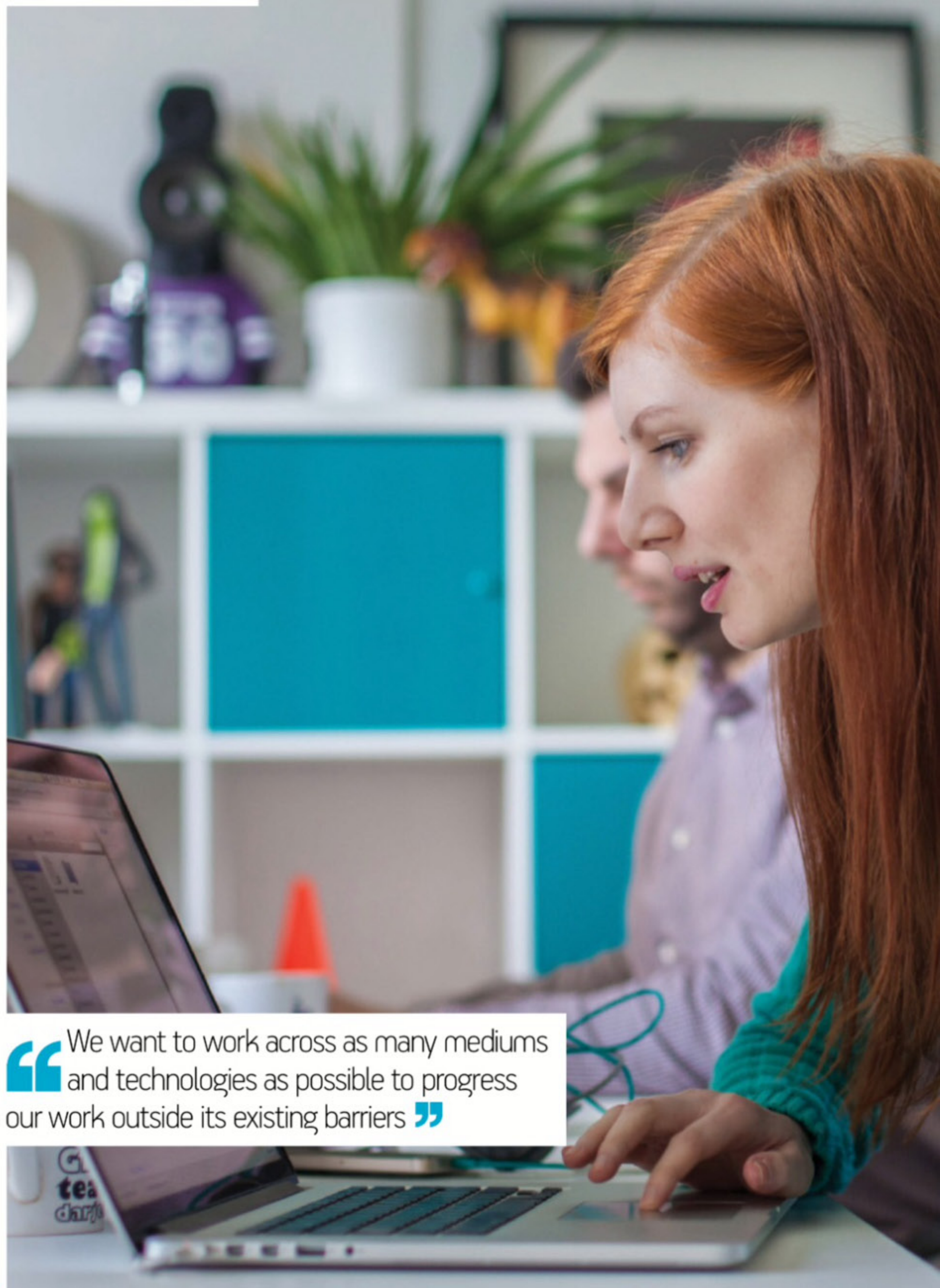
DAZZLE SHIP

WE SPEAK TO THE TEAM AT THIS FUTURE-OBSSESSED CREATIVE PRODUCTION STUDIO TO FIND OUT HOW THEY CREATE THEIR BESPOKE MOTION PROJECTS

Dazzle Ship states boldly on its website that, "At our core, we're a design studio but we believe in creativity beyond design." The creative production studio looks to push its limits, applying its skill and quality to all manner of platforms and projects. "Essentially everything is designed at some point, whether we are conscious of it or not. In terms of categorising your skillset, it's easy for designers to get pigeonholed... We want to work across as many mediums and technologies as possible to progress our work outside its existing barriers," says creative director Alex Donne Johnson. That ethos is apparent in the work that the studio outputs, senior producer Jody Mcalavey explains: "We were known for our cool design work, but we have taken that style and applied to UI/UX, TV, online and B2B content."

Dazzle Ship evolved from Donne Johnson's freelance career as a designer. He worked under the alias 'Vector Meldrew', which started off as branding and graphic design for fashion and music clients, and moved into VJing at clubs and festivals: "I learned motion and became a video specialist. After working hard to build up trust with clients, the projects started to become more about forming teams and developing concepts." From here, he realised that operating as a studio was essential to deliver work and take on bigger projects. Mcalavey knew Alex through the VJ scene; they both performed at festivals in their spare time. He graduated from Westminster Film School and worked in both documentary TV and online video production. "As Alex's freelance work moved more into mixing motion graphics and live action, we'd often discuss ideas and production techniques," he says. "When Alex started the studio this naturally progressed to us working on projects together."

The studio has now expanded and has a loyal team, who work together to deliver bespoke projects to well-known clients looking for something that stands out. Communication is key to what Dazzle Ship offers, but it's just as important to have the right people doing the right jobs to ensure high quality at all times, as account manager Bryan Longhurst explains: "Each member of the Dazzle Ship squad has a varied background, their influences have evolved from different sources and we like to embrace this dissimilarity when possible. Having a diversity of skills in our team allows everyone to do their job to the best of their ability, without crossing over into other areas of the business unnecessarily." ▶



“We want to work across as many mediums and technologies as possible to progress our work outside its existing barriers”



ABOUT THE STUDIO

DAZZLE SHIP
www.dazzleship.com
[@dazzleship](https://twitter.com/dazzleship)

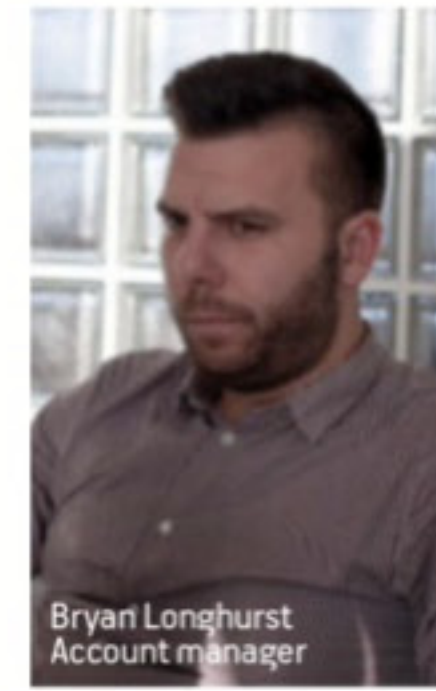
Dazzle Ship is a creative production studio producing films, digital content and multi-platform campaigns. It's a design studio at heart but drives to put creativity first.



Alex Donne Johnson
Creative director



Elin Giczi
Producer



Bryan Longhurst
Account manager

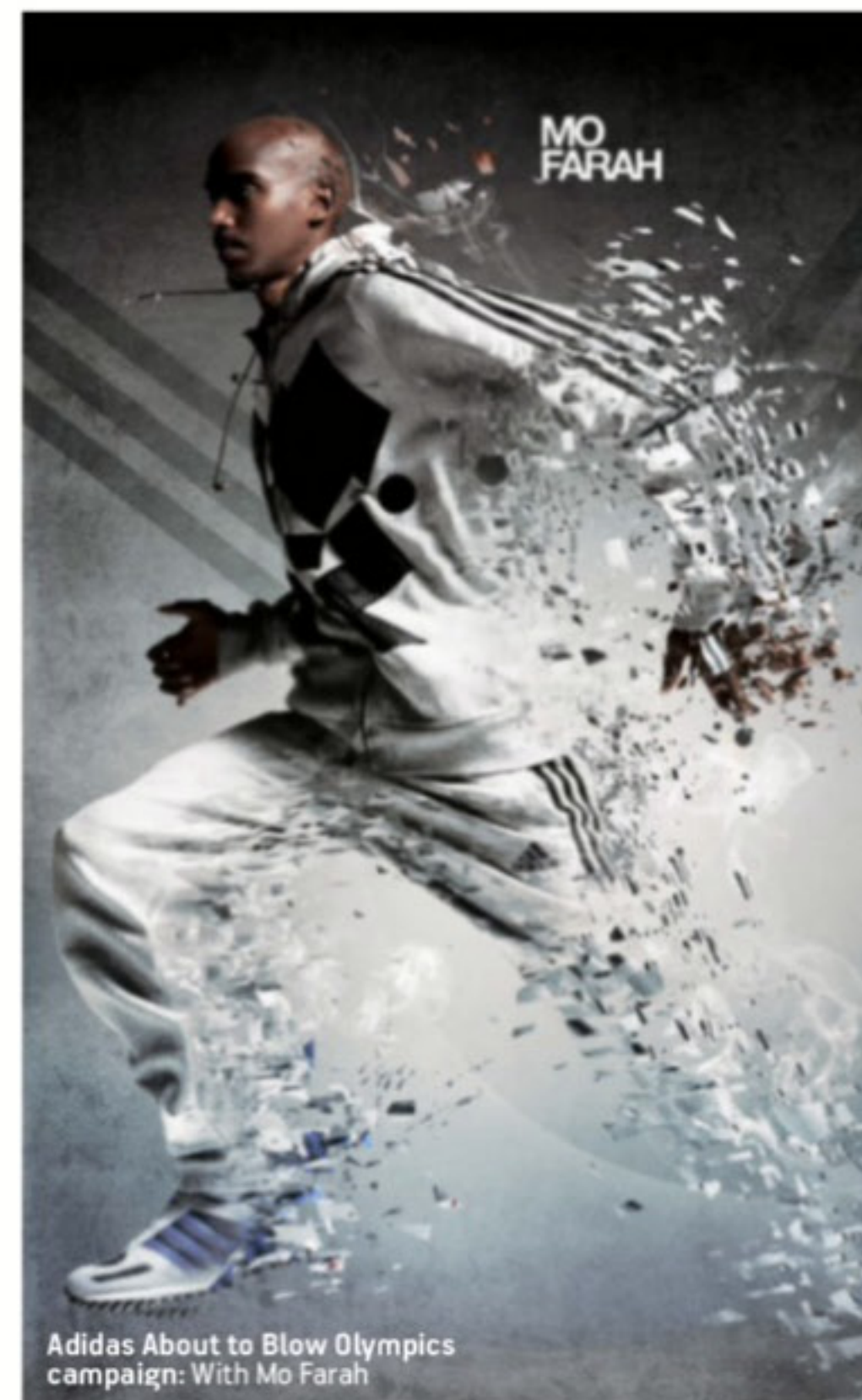


Jody Mcalavey
Senior producer



Teamwork: Focused and working as a team in the Dazzle Ship studios

All images © Dazzle Ship 2015



▶ Every project is bespoke, finding the best way to produce what the client wants, but in a way that hasn't been done before. "From receiving a brief we'll sit with the core production team and brainstorm. We normally consider how we can push forward the creative as much as possible within the client's constraints. We like to find new ways to work with technology or experiment with techniques we haven't explored yet," says Donne Johnson.

One project, which really did test the team to their full potential, was The Future of Big Data installation. This involved interactive touchscreens and projections for an experiential marketing installation. "It was a pretty cool brief that revolved around how 'big data' will be used in the future to fight crime. Think *Minority*

Report mixed with *Cluedo*. There was a lot of development work and the idea was constantly evolving, something that demanded a skilled creative team and good project management. The project was incredibly interesting to be involved with and we got to develop some stylish UI designs as well," says Donne Johnson. "The challenge came from understanding everything at a UX perspective before being able to see it as a physical experience. We went through months of development, wireframes, UX flow diagrams, UI designs that constantly evolved as each area was pushed forward... We had to be able to visualise the storytelling element from flat designs, as we weren't able to start testing until right at the end of the project."

This was definitely a technical challenge for the team, as Mcalavey describes: "The Future Zone, which we primarily worked on, was based around an 80-inch touchscreen computer, which was linked to 6x 4K projects creating an immersive interactive environment. It was challenging to work out how to effectively create an engaging narrative using the technology, making sure it was straightforward to use for an audience with a mixture of technological ability. The project was really well received by participants and I think due to the complexity it was even more rewarding to get that positive feedback."

While the studio has done amazing work for massive installations, it also takes on projects that it is passionate about for different reasons. For



■ JD SPORTS

THIS PROJECT INVOLVED A LIVE-ACTION SHOOT COMPOSITED WITH CG BACKGROUNDS TO SHOWCASE THE DETAIL OF JD'S FOOTWEAR PRODUCTS



01 | DRAFT 3D MODEL WITH IPHONE

Upon receiving the product we first create a draft 3D model that allows us to manipulate the object in a CG environment. We use our smartphone cameras and an app called 123D Catch to do this.



04 | STUDIO SHOOT WITH FULL CREW

We put together a crack team that consisted of well-known fashion director of photography Kit Fraser, known for his work on Dior, the lighting team from *Fast And Furious* and the props guy from *Star Wars*. Nothing could go wrong!



02 | PRE-VISUALISATION CAMERA MOVEMENT

Once we have the model, we use 3D software to play with camera moves. The idea here is to create something that focuses on the details of the shoe. Creating pre-vis allows us to send examples to the client before shooting, meaning we can refine everything in advance. Things are much harder to change afterwards!



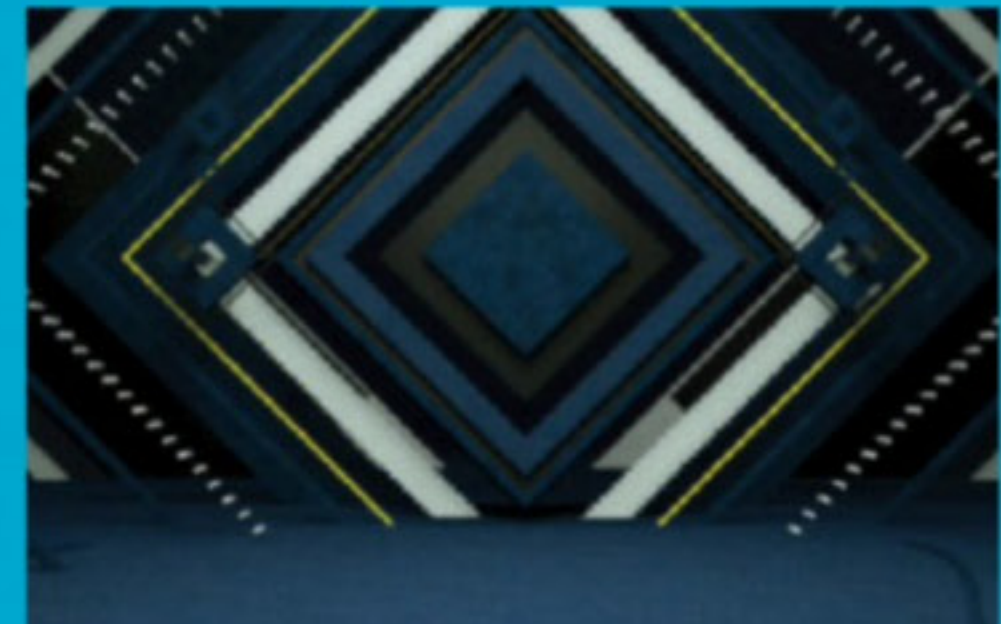
05 | CREATE CG BACKGROUND

Back at the studio with one of our CG artists, we created the 3D environments that the shoes would sit in.



03 | TRANSLATE CAMERA MOVES TO MOCO BOLT

To create the dynamic moves with a live-action camera, we used the Moco Bolt robotic arm attached to a Red Epic 5k. This was the same camera used in the film *Gravity*. It meant we could input our CG pre-vis moves into a real camera.



06 | FINAL RENDER

We created these photo-realistic renders and then composited the shoe footage over the top using After Effects.

▶ example, they are currently working on a series of infographic-style films for Wateraid, with the aim to better educate people in the process of achieving cleaner water in third-world countries. "It's great to do jobs for charities that are helping people in other parts of the world," says Mcalavey. "We're using a mixture of Illustrator to do the initial drawings and Photoshop to add compositing layers, such as textures, depth of field and vignettes. These projects will then be taken into After Effects for animation."

For such a motion-based studio, Photoshop is still an important part of the process. "Photoshop is a big part of our daily toolkit," says Donne Johnson. "The most common use is for creating style-frames for the video work we do. Photoshop is the perfect place to bring in the mixture of media we work with. Often it's a combination of CG renders, photography and vectors. We find it more comfortable than delving straight into After Effects, which can sometimes restrain creativity at the first hurdle." It is also used for storyboarding, as Mcalavey explains: "Photoshop speeds up the storyboard process, as it's often a lot easier to show ideas than to explain to designers and clients. This is especially acute when we work remotely with them, a quick sketch can accurately show an idea much better than an email or even a conversation over Skype."

“Photoshop is the perfect place to bring in the mixture of media we work with. Often it's a combination of CG renders, photography and vectors”



Red Bull Music Academy: Yearbook motion graphic

The studio itself is a hub of activity with a friendly team who love what they do. "We are a cheerful bunch of people! If you pop by our office, you'd most likely find us surrounded by lots of tea and lots of teal – our brand colour," enthuses producer Elin Giczi. This positive and creative vibe is exactly what Donne Johnson was hoping to achieve with his studio: "I wanted to create the studio that myself and everyone else are excited to come to every day, as I believe being happy is the key to good creative work."

The future certainly looks bright for this creative production team. Its versatility and ability to handle any project that is thrown at it is where its strengths lie. "Dazzle Ship is a cutting-edge and future-obsessed studio. Alex's experience and contacts allow us to discuss various work in many disciplines," says Longhurst. "We can explore areas that a static film studio or design studio

would not be able to. We can collaborate with anyone on any kind of project. This is very exciting; using directors, artists, or motion graphics designers based on their suitability to the particular job in hand."

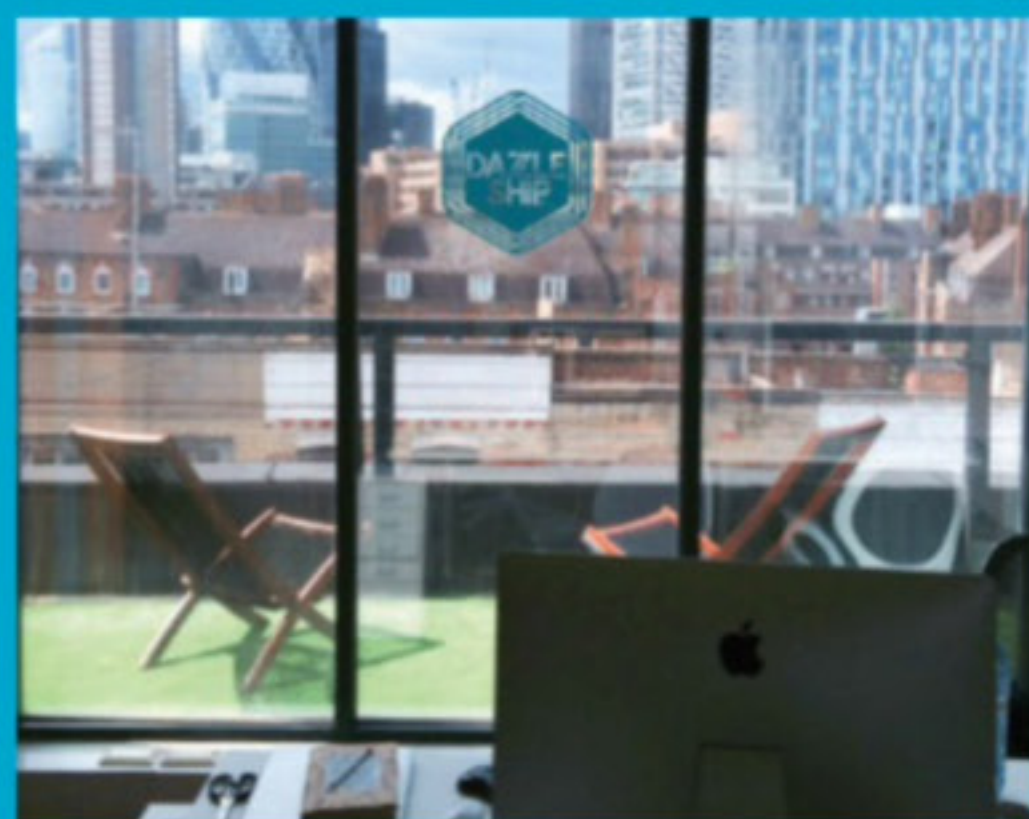
It's down to the handpicked team, each with their own strengths. "The fact that there are many people with different backgrounds gives us the advantage of a unique mix of perspectives," says Giczi.

Their aspirations are certainly high and forward-looking, while maintaining their individual ethos. "We want to be doing work that's even more 'dazzling' and working in partnership with clients that want to achieve this too," says Donne Johnson. "We want to keep exploring the corporate and commercial space, but also making sure we are doing stuff with a positive impact through working with charities."

"We're also building up a great team of designers at the studio and we have some really exciting projects in the pipeline – so watch this space!"

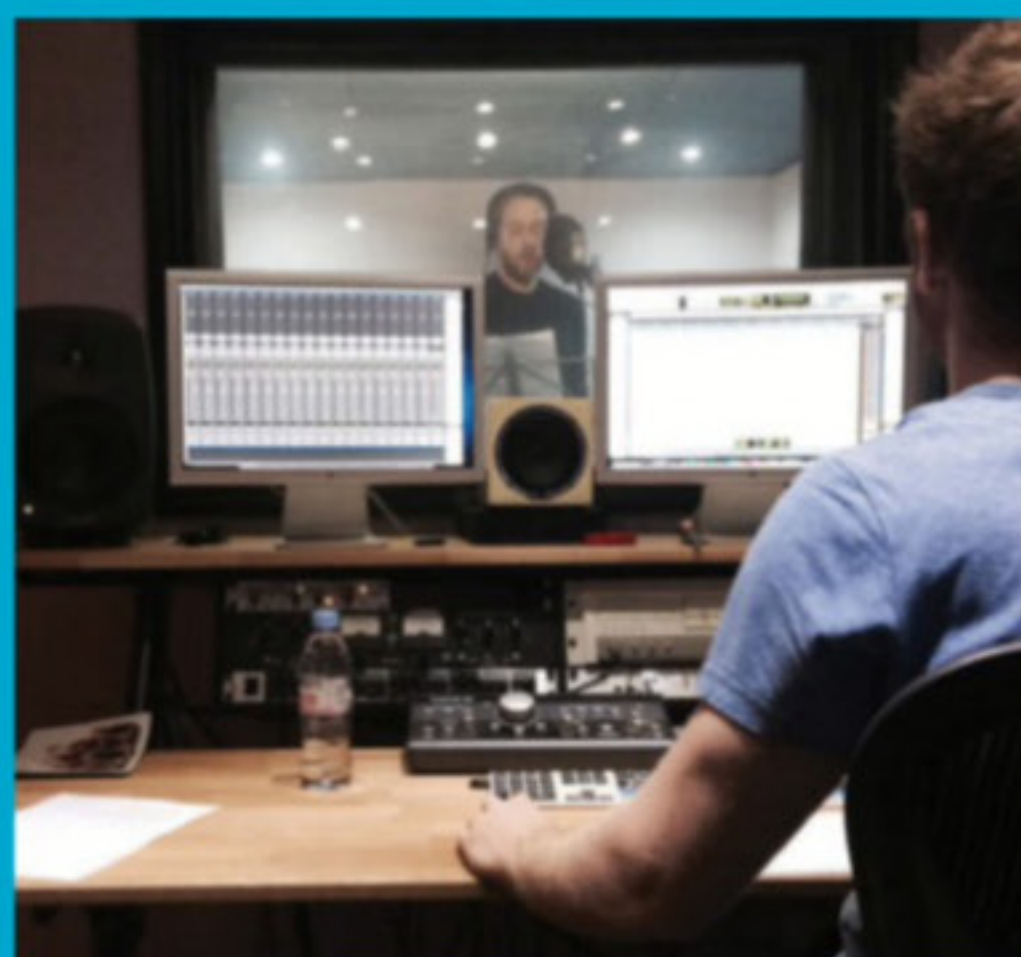
■ A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ALEX DONNE JOHNSON

THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR TALKS US THROUGH ONE WORKING DAY



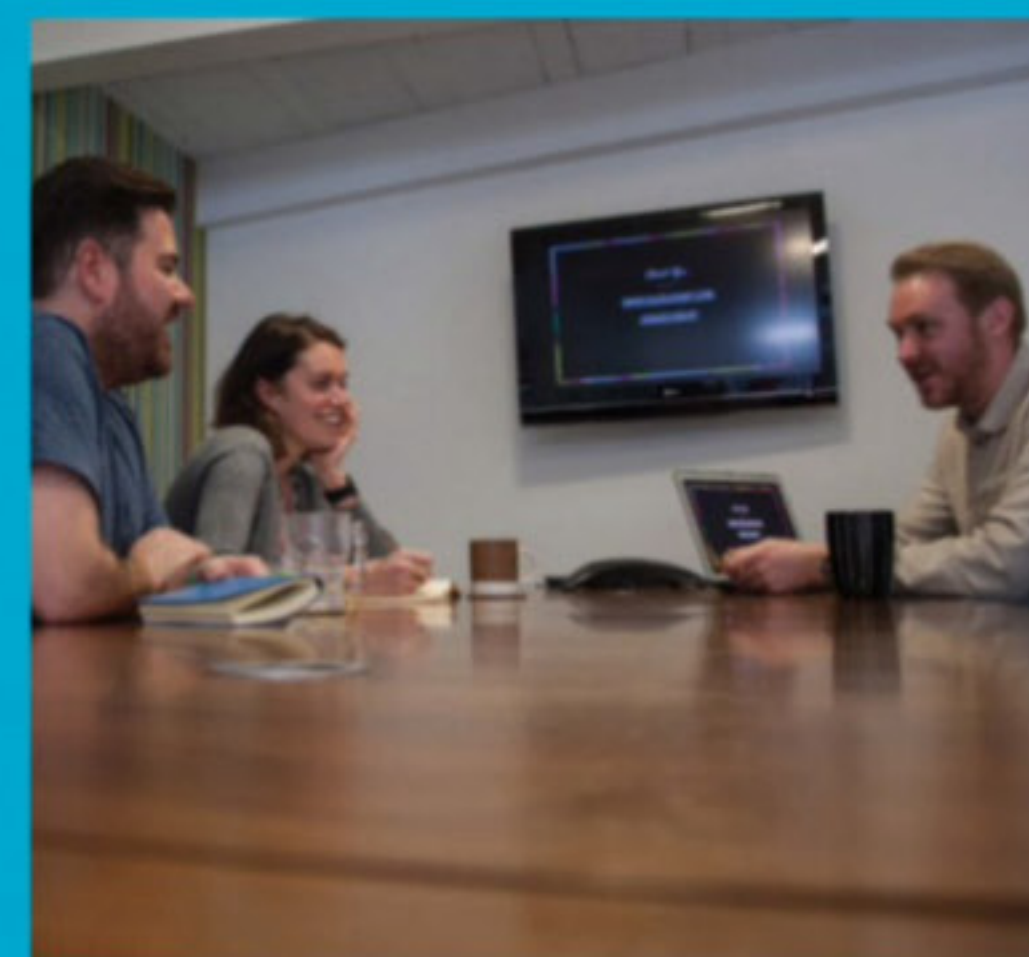
08:30 | GET PREPARED

First one in the studio on this beautiful day. Being in early allows me that extra time to prepare for the day before people start asking me questions!



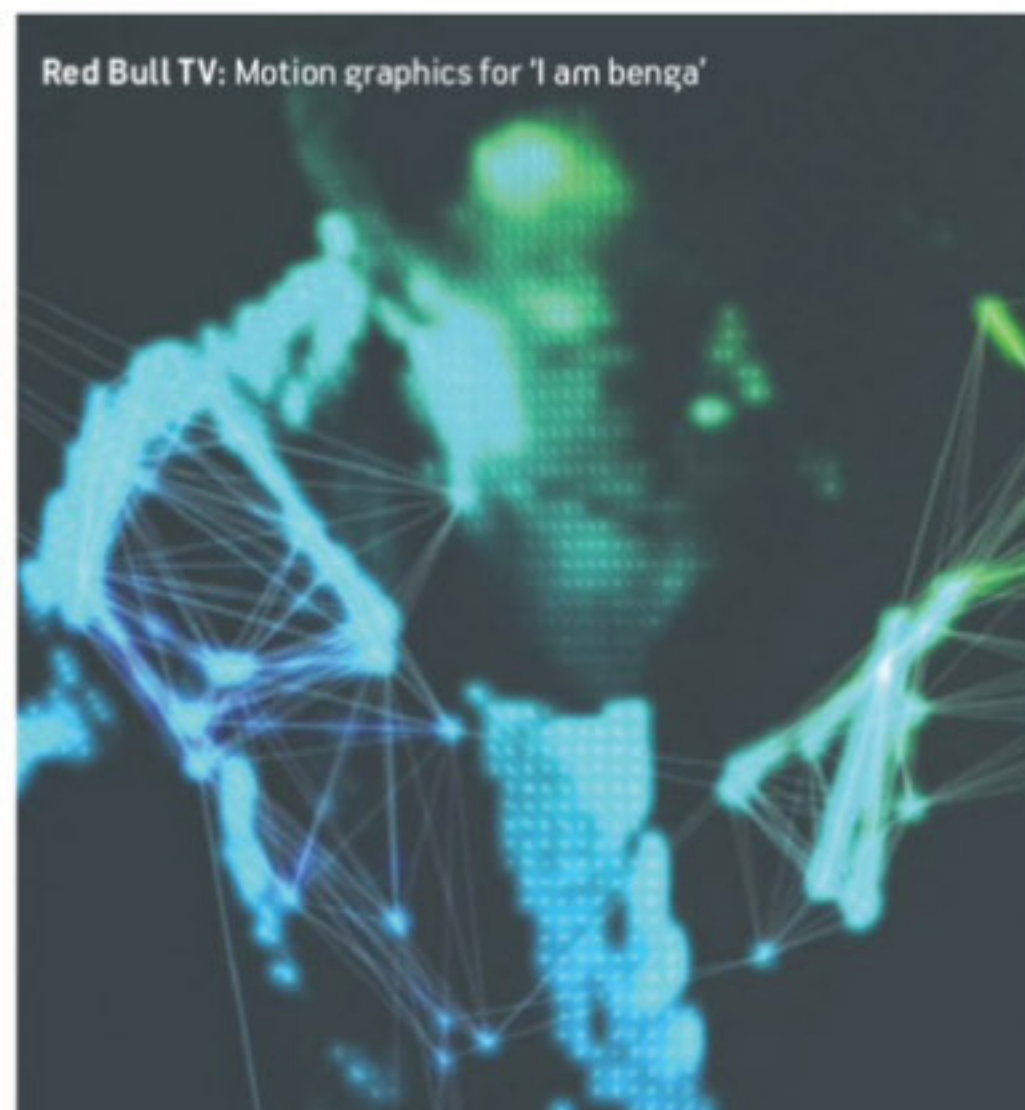
11:00 | TV WORK

Attending VO session and grading for our latest TV commercial.



13:00 | FUTURE PROJECTS

Client meeting with Taxi Studio to discuss future projects.



Red Bull TV: Motion graphics for 'I am bengal'



Adidas About to Blow Olympics campaign: Jeffrey Lawal Balogun

TOP 5 PRODUCTION TIPS

Dazzle Ship's essential advice

■ USE A CONCEPT

It's easy to get carried away thinking of cool new techniques and styles to explore, however sometimes you find yourself going down this road without a solid concept and then trying to shoehorn something in. Put concept first and then think of the best way to achieve it.

■ KILL YOUR DARLINGS

When it comes to generating ideas it's easy to become precious; often people are precious over their first idea and it can be hard to develop in a group dynamic. It's important to be self-critical.

■ THE CUSTOMER ISN'T ALWAYS RIGHT

Sometimes the client will put forward requests that are detrimental to the quality of a project. It's your job to advise them in an amicable way that it may not be the right decision. Diplomacy is the key.

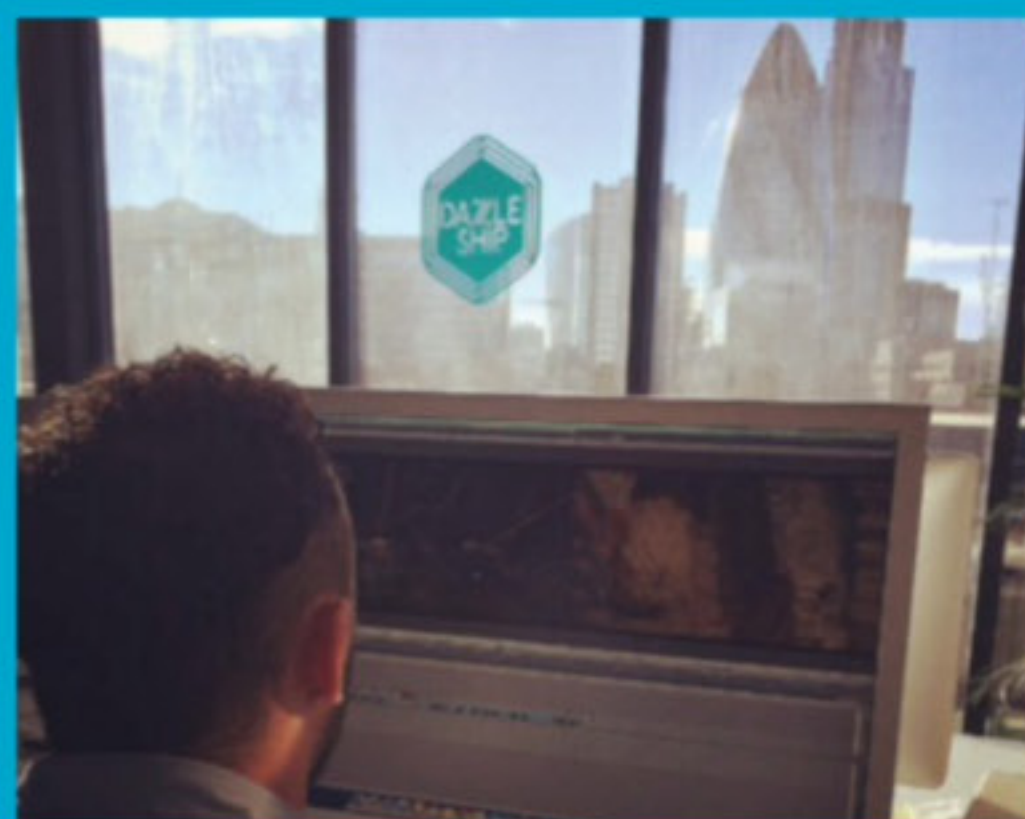
■ WORK SMART, NOT HARD

Burnout is quite common in creative industries. Late nights and all-nighters can be unavoidable. If you can't perform mentally you risk failure. Be running at 100 per cent every day, have off days and break projects down into smaller chunks with manageable deadlines.

■ KILL YOUR EGO

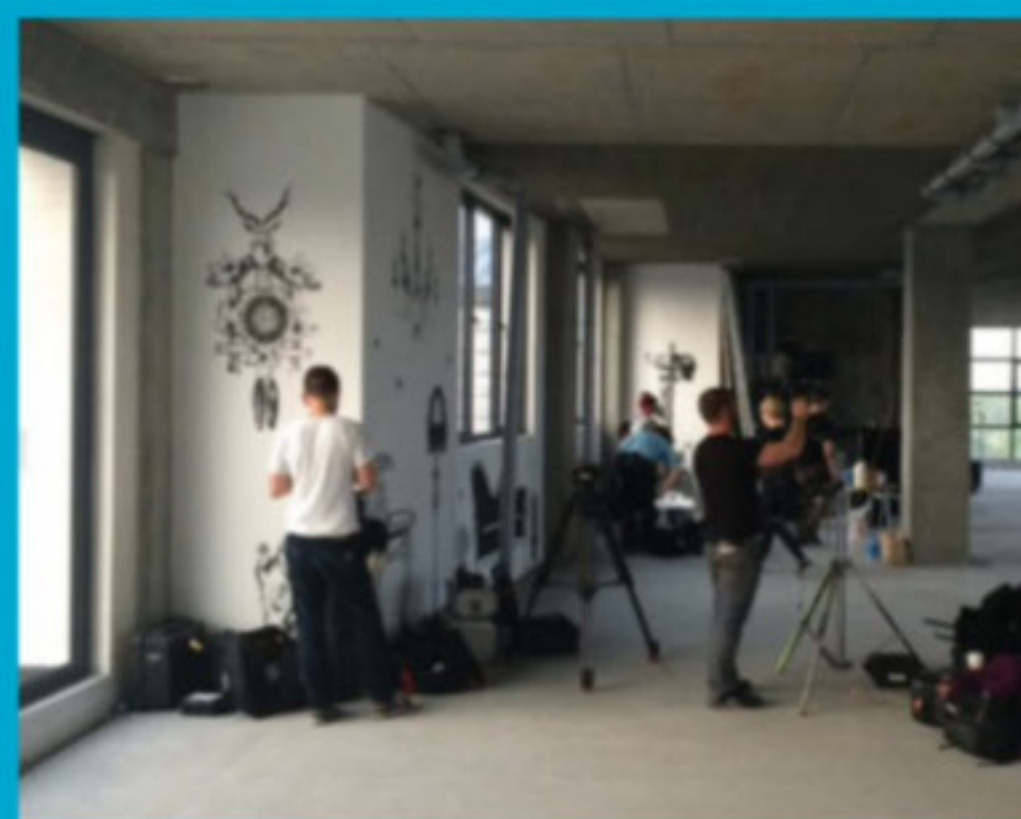
Successful creative work is about collaboration. It's important to enjoy the process and the working relationship. Ego can always come into play with creative work, however if you can manage your own, problems are less likely to occur.

“We can collaborate with anyone on any kind of project. This is very exciting; using directors, artists, or motion graphics designers based on their suitability to the particular job in hand”



15:00 | FINAL EDITS

Sitting in on the edit, bringing together the VO and final-graded footage of our TVC ready for delivery via Clearcast. Hitting TV screens very soon.



18:00 | NIGHT SHOOT

No rest for the wicked! On a night shoot getting some live-action footage for a VFX commercial we've been developing for a soon to be launched project.



00:00 | PIZZA TIME

Still shooting, so ordered the whole crew pizzas directly to our location in East London. Using the hire car as a dinner table. This is what dedication looks like!

All images: © The Team 2014

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PRO TRICKS FOR MASTERING COLOUR

LEARN HOW TO
USE HISTOGRAMS
ON P36 AND
TAKE COMPLETE
CONTROL OF
YOUR COLOURS

Know what you've got: "Calibration is accomplished by taking a standard colour target (physical in the case of cameras and scanners, digital in the case of monitors and printers) where the values of the colours are known."

Imagine walking into a department store: "There are a hundred TVs on the wall. They're all receiving the same television signal. But they're all slightly different colours; one has great reds; one has a blue cast; and one has less shadow detail but more contrast. This is the situation with everything a graphic designer deals with: our monitors render colour one way, each digital camera renders colour another way, and every printing press and paper and ink combination renders it another way."

Side by side: "You're only going to notice [the difference] if the audience sees the same image printed on different pieces and those pieces are placed next to each other."

Eye of the beholder: "In many cases, the colour that you get, with an uncalibrated camera, an uncalibrated editing monitor and an uncalibrated printing press (or viewing monitor) looks okay to the average person. The human eye is very adaptable; if you put on rose coloured glasses, in a very short time your eyes adjust and you barely notice the colour change."

Working together: "Use software or hardware to compare the colour of the standard against the colour output by the device. The hardware or software then creates a colour table that tells the computer how to compensate for those differences. The result is truer colour. Ideally you want to calibrate everything."

Don't leave it too late: "It's even possible to hit a perfect storm; the original photo has a colour cast, the editing monitor has a different colour cast, and the designer uses that to balance the colour of the original, so by the time it reaches the printer the colour is way off and it's impossible to fix it on press."

© Deane Nettles

WHY AND WHAT TO CALIBRATE

DESIGNER DEANE NETTLES (WWW.DEANENETTLES.COM) ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CALIBRATING MONITORS, CAMERAS AND PRINTERS

HOW, AND HOW OFTEN TO CALIBRATE

Simon Prais, the technical director at X-Rite Photo Europe (www.xritephoto.com), says that "monitor calibration should be repeated on a monthly basis. The process takes between three and ten minutes depending on if [you are] using the i1 Display Pro or the Color Munki Display." He advises that brightness should be 90–120 CDm², with "the lower end if you are in low light, the higher end if you are in brighter conditions." Colour temperature should ideally be D65 (6500°K), as "this is very much the accepted standard for a calibrated monitor white-balance temperature, however if [you are] matching to prints viewed in a professional controlled D50 viewing booth, a corresponding D50 monitor calibration should be set."

He continues: "The frequency of printer calibration depends on a number of factors; predominantly the consistency of the printer and media, along with your own personal expectations of colour accuracy. As a general guide a printer will benefit from profiling every two to three months – but other considerations such as a different batch of ink or media could result in the necessity to re-profile. Camera calibration (if shooting in RAW), should be implemented whenever time and the situation allows. This comprises of capturing an image of an X-Rite Color Checker Passport chart and then processing it to create a calibration file that can be applied to your images, at the point when you come to work on them."



© X-RITE

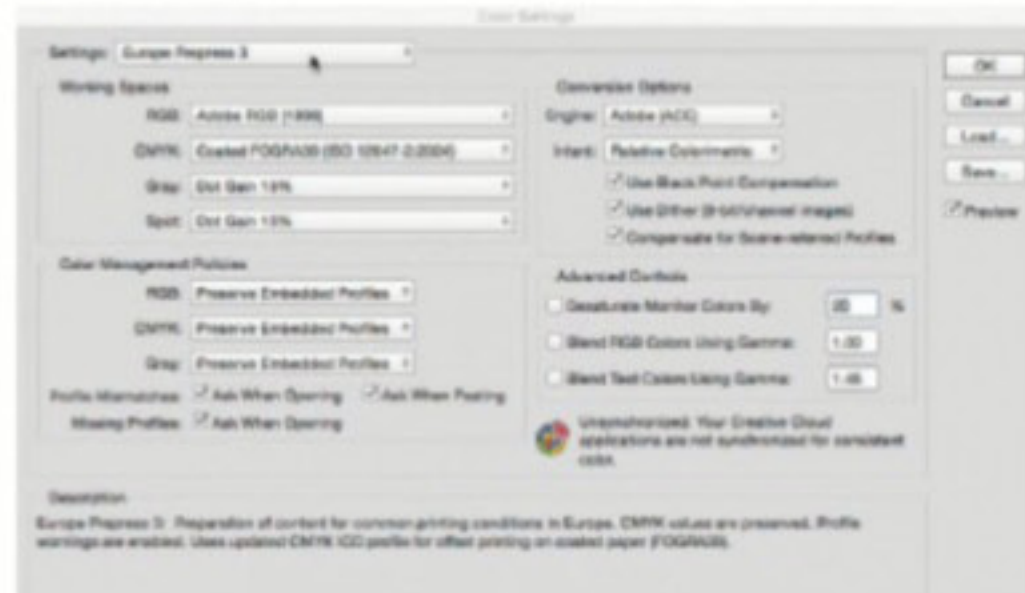
UNDERSTAND ICC

Colour management expert Paul Sherfield (www.missinghorsecons.co.uk) explains that there are “around seven differing types of ICC profiles.” ICC is the International Color Consortium, an organisation set up to look at specification for managing digital colour, and an ICC profile “gives colour meaning to images when used by software that is ICC aware.”

For general use, Sherfield explains, most designers only “need to look at RGB and CMYK profiles. An RGB profile in an image is usually defined by the creator. The de facto ‘standard’ for professional photography is a profile called AdobeRGB1998.”

CMYK profiles have a different purpose. “In colour management speak,” explains Sherfield, “they are what is termed device dependent. This means each CMYK profile is added at a defined way of printing. It describes the printing method, paper stock and the inks or toners used.” So if you’re converting images to CMYK for print it’s important to know the printing method and paper to be used. Sherfield notes: “The ‘default’ CMYK setting is wrong for the European market, and is not even current for the US market.”

Lab colour is something that many professional Photoshop-using artists never have to think about, but Sherfield explains that it is “a colour gamut or colour space that models human colour perception. It is modelled in the colour management system’s software and as the ‘connection’ space used when converting from one profile to another. So when ‘Mode’ or ‘Convert to Profile’ is used the image with its profile describing its colours is translated into the Lab colour space, then using the chosen output profile, converted from Lab to this new colour space and profile.”



ESTABLISHING GAMUTS

PRE-DETERMINING THE COLOURS THAT CAN BE USED IN YOUR WORK HAS REAL POWER, AS JON WESTWOOD EXPLAINS



01 | CONSTRUCT CONFINES

“When painting with a gamut,” says Jon Westwood (www.jonwestwood.ca), “whatever colours are established are the ones that will define the colours in the piece. This is an extreme example of how the confines of a gamut can affect the colours in a piece. Value can be interpreted however you want, but the idea is to keep all colours in the composition within what’s given in that triadic area.”



02 | SHRINK YOUR CHOICES

Here, “the gamut is rotated and kept the same size and shape. It’s closer to what we want, but there still isn’t enough restriction in our colour choices. Let’s shrink it even more.”



03 | BREAK YOUR OWN RULES

This is the final image and the gamut used to define the piece. Westwood explains that “the colours are much more muted and controlled and most of the variation is interpreted in value rather than saturation. There are a few areas where some liberties are taken outside of the gamut, like on the terminator of the mountain’s shadow or the vibrant rock on the far left, but the idea is to keep the general image contained, which will bring out those features even more.”

© Jon Westwood



© Aaron Campbell

DON'T LIMIT YOURSELF

“This may seem obvious to experienced Photoshop users,” weighs in Aaron Campbell (www.aaroncampbell.ca), “but many people who are new to Photoshop feel they need to always design in CMYK if they intend to print, which severely limits the amount of colour you can use in your image. Designing in RGB can allow you to have tons of variety in colour, so when you need to print it, all you have to do is adjust the colours in a flattened CMYK image using tools such as Replace Color, Hue/Saturation, Channels and adjustment layers... It is also good to keep in mind what colours you’re using; bright colours such as neon green (#a2fe1e) or bright magenta (#f75ddf) will not properly display when printed, but display beautifully on monitors.”

► PROFESSIONAL APPROACHES TO CALIBRATION



Paradigm Color Studio's "approach to colour on digital devices is to view the content on as many different popular devices as we can and find a good balance," says Muram. "We will sometimes create printed proofs for online work, but only so we can make notes about what needs to be revised. Jobs going to press we absolutely create a printed contract proof to the print standard and media the job is being reproduced."

© Paradigm Color Studio



"Like most studios," says Fred Muram, managing director of the Paradigm Color Studio (www.paradigmcolorstudio.com), "we have a host of issues we have to identify from the moment we receive files. The goal is to make sure we are able to translate colour properly to the standard the images will be reproduced. Once we have submission standards from the printing company, or media distributor, we go through all of the assets and make certain everything we are delivering meets the standard. Every once in a while we have to figure out a complex project, usually dealing with additional spot colours that need to get separated in a particular way and we have to figure out a creative work-around."

© Jennifer Marx Photography / Paradigm Color Studio



"Most people think about colour theory with regards to colour matching and graphic design," notes Muram, "but there is a very scientific approach to colour theory when discussing colour management. There is a great book by Jan-Peter Homann called *Digital Color Management* that does a great job about the principles of digital colour and how to understand gamut for different standards (be prepared for lots of equations and graphs)."



© Saverio Truglia / Paradigm Color Studio

When it comes to calibration, Muram takes both hardware and software seriously. "On the hardware side," he says, "we use X-Rite i1 devices for calibrating monitors, printers, and for creating profiles for our proofing devices to meet various printing standards. The quality of equipment is also very important. Prepress grade monitors like EIZO and NEC make a huge difference. We have used Apple Cinema Displays as well, but I have always felt they have a bit too much contrast. For output, I really love our Epson 9900 and 7900 models. They calibrate fantastically and hold colour quite well. On the software side we have quite a lot of tools for managing colour. Our setup includes monitor calibrations, Photoshop colour setting, InDesign and PDF creation colour management, and then our RIP software. We have two kinds of RIPs, which allow us to produce extremely accurate colour on our proofing devices for contract proofing."

BEAR THE LIGHT SOURCE IN MIND

The new Cintiq 27QHD comes with Wacom® Colour Manager, which is a customised version of the X-Rite i1DisplayPro. According to Wacom you'll be able "to achieve a more precise adjustment of gray scale gamma, white point, and other primary settings." The profiler software has two modes, basic and advanced. With the former you knew little understanding of colour science or calibration, with the latter you have "infinite control over white point, luminance, contrast ratio, gamma and more."

And those extremes are appropriate, given that colour is incredibly complicated to manage perfectly across the myriad of devices we all use and the variety of inks and papers an image could be printed on, but in the end it is quite simple, and about achieving the colour

that you want. X-Rite's Simon Prais says "We love to blame a computer and technology and to get concerned about complex settings whilst overlooking the obvious. If the objective is to match the printer to the screen, remember that just because the print is a tangible object, the colours can still vary considerably depending on the viewing conditions. Taken to an extreme, switch the room lights off and you have a black sheet of paper; switch on the lights and there is potentially a colourful image. But the colour balance and intensity on the image is totally dependent on the type of light under which you are viewing the print. Room lighting will change throughout the day and will be affected by reflections, how you see a print will also vary depending on how close the image is to the light source."



MANAGE FROM ALL SIDES

DEANE NETTLES EXPLAINS HOW A HOST OF PHOTOSHOP PROFESSIONALS CAN MANAGE THEIR COLOUR PROCESSES

© Herrmann & Starke LLC/ August, Lang & Husak/Deane Nettles

Don't worry about the web: You can check work on every device you have, and your friends' too, ultimately, you can't control how someone else views your web projects. "But it's still better to have your side of it calibrated so you know that the quality is the best it possibly can be on your end," says Nettles.

Be a stickler: "If you send a file to a printer, they have in-house colour management; be sure you get a press proof back from them so you can check the colour, and be sure to go to the printer and view their proof in their colour-balanced proofing room to be sure of what you're seeing. Looking at it at home under mixed lighting sources won't let you see colour accurately."

Read up: "If you really want to know a lot about colour management, there's a good (if slightly out-of-date) book called *Real World Photoshop CS3* by David Blatner and Conrad Chavez."



Snap right: "A photographer can calibrate their camera images by shooting a colour target in the light they are shooting in; the colour of the image can then be adjusted using a plugin to Lightroom like the X-Rite Color Checker Passport. For this Betsy Fisher bus shelter signage, the photographer colour balanced their equipment, allowing me to have faithful reproductions of the shoes to assemble the final art."

Use your own judgement: "Set Photoshop to fill your screen, so that photo of your honey on the desktop doesn't influence your eye's ability to see colour."

Design bright: "A designer can calibrate their monitor using 'pucks' or 'spiders' Even something as simple as X-Rite's ColorMunki Smile would be an improvement over an uncalibrated monitor."

© Kevin Smith Photography / Paradigm Color Studio



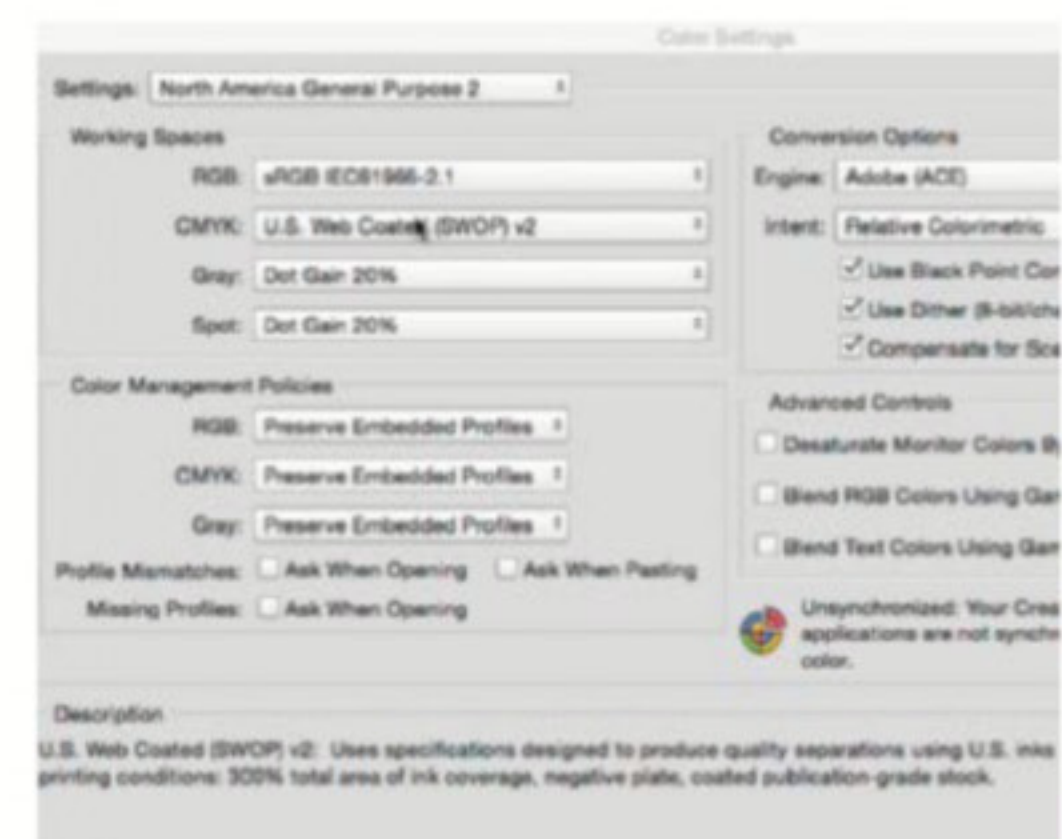
KNOW YOUR VALUES

"We are constantly doing colour matching for our clients," says Fred Muram. "These jobs range from product, packaging, food and furniture and need to be colour corrected to match different references. I have found the more expensive the product the more attention that the colour matches precisely. Our studio has GTI colour view stations at each workstation to allow us to correctly view the references in correct light as we are making adjustments. We also have spectrophotometers we use to read colour values from the reference material and get RGB, CMYK, and Lab values that closely match the sample." Essentially it all goes back to the fact that there are two types of colour mixing; additive and subtractive. Additive is using the three primary colours, red, green and blue. Subtractive is using cyan, magenta and yellow, with the addition of Key (black) in printing because the other three don't create an impressive enough result for large amounts of the stuff.

START RIGHT

Paul Sherfield, who runs colour management courses through his company The Missing Horse Consultancy (www.missinghorsecons.co.uk), says that all too many Photoshop users don't understand the settings that you can access though the Edit menu, which are vital. "There are a number of colour setting Pre-sets in a drop down," he says, "the opening Default being North America General Purpose 2. This is not a good setting for professional work, especially for digital photography and print

production. It is best to create your own settings and use better CMYK ICC profiles, which as they are not in the Adobe CS/CC build, will need to be installed. However, if this is a step too far then change the colour setting file to Europe Prepress 3, which is in the latest versions of Photoshop. For print production work," he adds, "always talk to your printer and or client [regarding] the CMYK profile to use for converting images. They may say, supply RGB images, which they will convert."



► CONVERT TO CMYK WITHOUT LOSING SATURATION

"Much like a painting gamut, a gamut in computer graphics and printing is the range of colours that a computer or printer is able to produce," explains Westwood. "The ideal method of preparing items for print is to keep as many original colours as possible and only change those that would be affected by a mode change into CMYK. Unfortunately, some colours simply don't exist in ink, so some of those vibrant reds, hot pinks, and mint greens might need to be adjusted and some saturation may be lost, but you can get close to the original RGB image with some adjustment. Luckily Photoshop comes with its own colour management display options called 'gamut warning' and 'proof colours'. Both are available in the View menu – make sure the proof setup is set to display a CMYK gamut in View>Proof Setup>Working CMYK.

Selecting Proof Colours will display what the image will look like when converted into the CMYK colour mode, while Gamut Warning will highlight exactly what colours will be affected in the change. From here, it's possible to make a number of colour adjustments while still within an RGB format with the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer [Window>Adjustments] or the Replace Color adjustment [Image>Adjustments>Replace Color]."



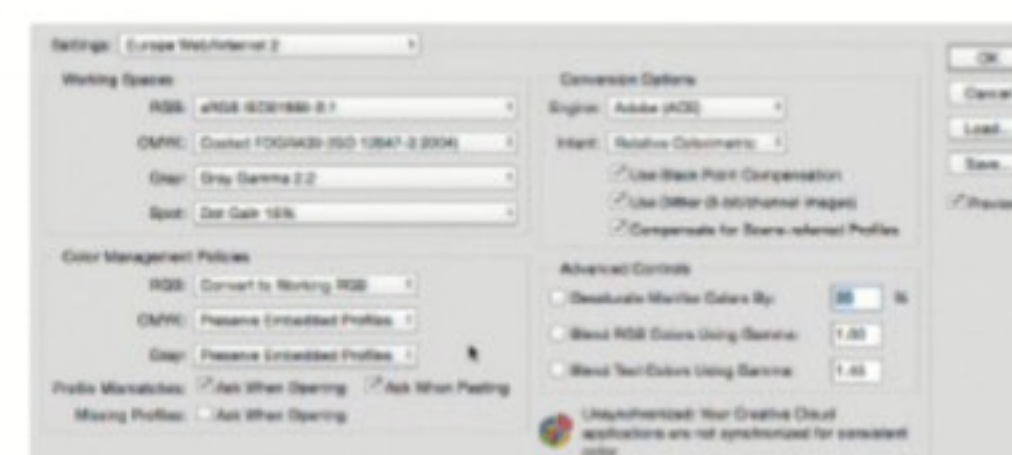
© Jon Westwood

CHANGE THE CHANNEL

Aaron Campbell likes to use Channels to "quickly adjust the colour of the atmosphere in my image, which, most commonly for me, is an illustration. Just doing a quick Levels adjust on one of the Channels can make it easy to change the hue of the large spots of coloured glowing parts of my pieces without having to go in and change each part independently. Let's say I have eight glowing mushrooms in my piece that all have an ambient green glow and I want it to be more green and

stronger, I can go in the Green channel and do a Levels adjust to slide the whites up a bit or brush in the parts I want to be more green, instead of adjusting them one by one."

If he's using Replace Color, for instance to change the colour of someone's clothing in a photo, he'll "try to have as much fuzziness as possible to make sure all of the colour gets changed, then just brush in any parts of the coloured area that didn't change with a soft brush on Overlay or Soft Light."



CREATE ONLINE IMAGES DIFFERENTLY

"Preparing colour images for the web, social media and so on, does need a differing colour approach," says Paul Sherfield. "As the content will be viewed on consumer devices; computer monitors, tablets and smartphones with screens that in the main have an sRGB gamut this is then of course the profile to use. However do not embed the profile as this will increase the file size of the image. Most web browsers do not yet support ICC colour management, but just assume sRGB. So convert your images to sRGB, around 96dpi. It is best to talk to the web developers involved as regards the file format, but is in doubt use JPEG. There is a Web colour settings file in the Color Setting menu in Photoshop."

Colour management is becoming more automated, Sherfield explains, adding that "Used correctly Adobe CS/CC is a repro shop in a box." However "knowing what colour setting files to use, and how to make and install customised ones does still require knowledge and training."



© Aaron Campbell

EVEN WHITE NEEDS WORK

Perhaps surprisingly, Jon Westwood says that one of his most challenging images in terms of colour management was *Winter Town*, an image that is largely white. This was because "the tones and values needed to reflect the conditions of the environment in the painting, but also needed to be manipulated into what I wanted the viewer to experience from it. In this case, even though the painting would depict a harsh, cold snowstorm, I wanted the viewer to feel warm when they imagined themselves there. This was achieved mostly through atmospheric perspective and colour temperature."

"Colours are very much associated with temperature; reds, yellows, and oranges describing a warmer temperature and violets, blues, and cool greens describing cooler temperatures. It was very important in this piece to give the illusion of cool colours, while not

actually including any, which I think helped to produce the feeling of cosiness in an otherwise harsh environment. As long as colours are seen in relation to one another, and stay within the predetermined colour gamut, a warm colour like a reddish-grey can look like a cool green if it's placed adjacent to a bunch of very warm colours that look white (like the greenish area of snow in the bottom right)."

Westwood also uses atmospheric perspective, which is "the perception of objects as they approach the background as a result of the atmosphere they're placed in. In this case, the build-up of snow in the air helps to establish a very discernible atmospheric gradation. I flattened warm tones and values as the foreground receded, steadily transitioning them into a single tone neutral grey, which in combination with the change of warm colours in the foreground to cooler colours in the background helped to achieve that illusion."



© X-RITE

ALWAYS CHECK COLOUR SETTINGS

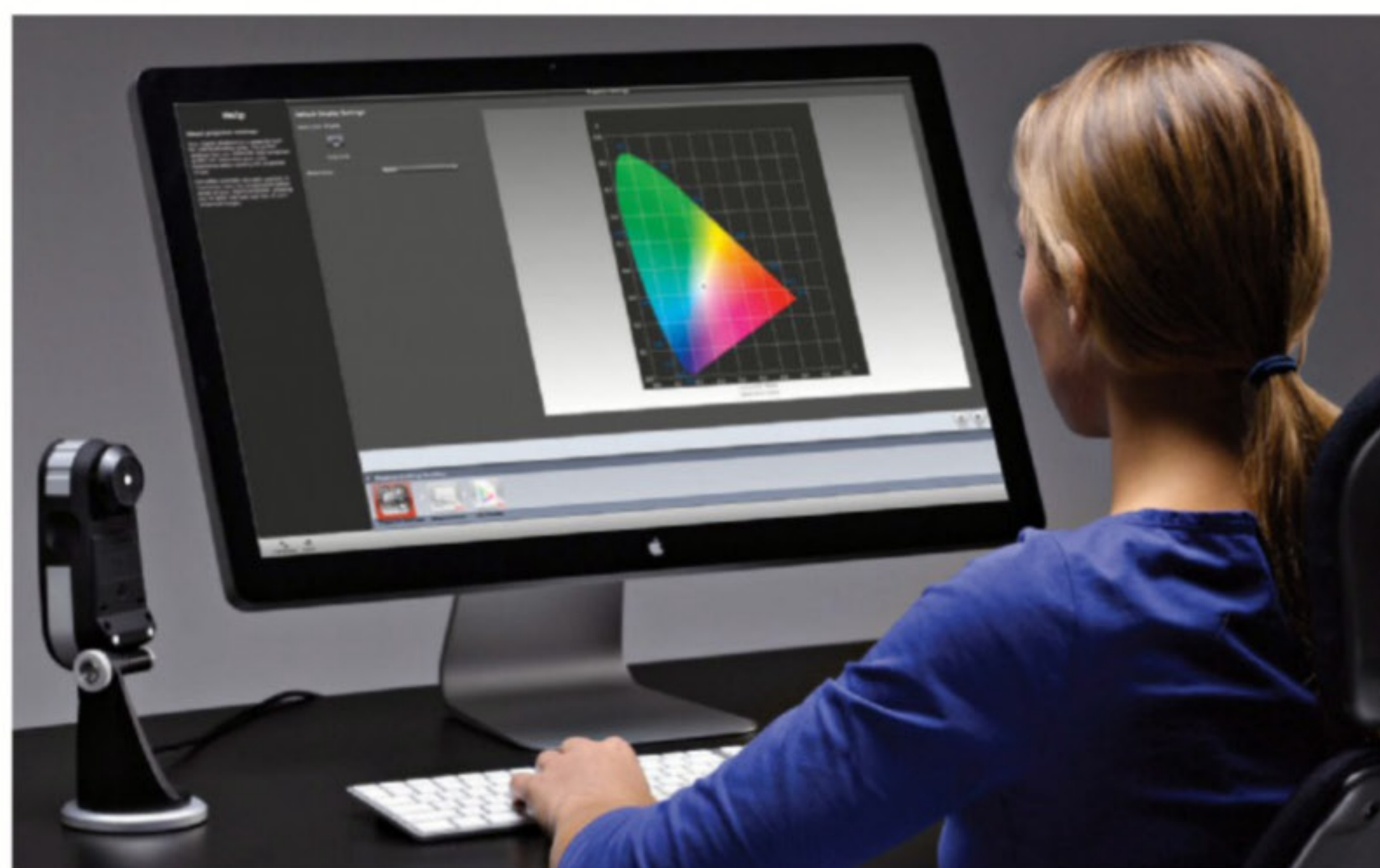
The key consideration when it comes to colour management is "to determine the primary use of the final imagery. Is it to be viewed on-screen, online or in print?" says X-Rite's Simon Prais. As long as you have that in mind, colour management can become a simple check list of considerations that you always have in the back of your mind. His advises: "1: Select Adobe colour settings appropriate to your work requirements. 2: Calibrate your monitor to the suggested default settings (and your printer if applicable). 3: Compare the screen display to that of your profiled print, ideally with a hood on the monitor and a correctly illuminated print. 4: If you are using a GrafiLite, rather than a professional viewing booth, adjust the brightness of the monitor to achieve a comparable contrast display to that of the illuminated print, this is easiest achieved when using a monochrome test image. And 5: Recalibrate the monitor without adjusting the brightness in order to achieve a colour correct calibration to match the brightness and contrast of your printed image."



© Jon Westwood

USE A HOOD

The missing link, once you have taken control of the colour calibration of your monitor and printer," notes X-Rite's Simon Prais, "is the conditions under which you are viewing your screen and the illumination of your physical prints. Professional top grade monitors tend to include a monitor hood – this is for a good reason, the surrounding light and reflections will affect what you see. Also, a hood creates a tunnel effect resulting the ability to set the monitor brightness at a lower level which can provide a more realistic representation of a print whilst also reducing the risk of eye strain. If such a monitor is out of budget, it is also possible to add a monitor hood separately. The PC Hood is a versatile and sturdy product that fits most monitors from 15" up to 27" and includes a cable access space for when connecting a monitor calibrator."



© X-RITE



© Jon Westwood

► HUE AND CRY

"I generally use the Hue/Saturation adjustment on a specific portion of an image," says Jon Westwood. "For more significant changes, I'll tend to use a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer [Window>Adjustments] in order to work non-destructively, or the Selective Color adjustment. Hue/Saturation can be a powerful tool for dramatically changing a specific area of colour in a work like if the skin tones aren't as vibrant as I want them to be, or if a sky isn't muted enough. Another application is in adding richer colour variation to a piece. Often I will work in a base layer which defines preliminary colours, a

pre-beauty layer which defines tone and other details, and a beauty layer which blends and renders details and linework. Saturating and lightening the pre-beauty or base layer makes colours shine through to the gaps in the beauty layer and adds more colour and value variation and a little bit more interest in the object being rendered."

But all of Photoshop's tools are for nothing if you don't know what you want the colours to do in an image. In *Strange Sunset*, your eye is "greeted by the vibrant magentas of the rocks in the close midground, as it moves up to the reddish pinks in

the background. One role of complementary colours (colour opposite each other on the colour wheel) is to help establish a clear distinction between objects. I wanted the dichotomy of light and shade to be particularly visible, so as the reds of the midground transition to yellow, they're stopped abruptly by the complementary purple rocks in the midground which brings forth a distinct difference in atmosphere. The eye then moves down to the riders in the foreground, accented with purple-blues to provide something of a split complementary colour scheme."

ADJUSTMENT ACTION

"Selective Color is one of my favourite adjustment layers in Photoshop," says Jon Westwood. "I use it mainly for post processing on large areas of a painting or the whole painting. It differs from Hue/Saturation because it allows me to add hues to specific values from colour channels rather than just adjust hues on their own using a single colour channel. It can be used to change the temperature of a painting by adding a slightly warm or cool tone to the darks or lights in an image. It can also be used to add some vibrancy to a specific colour without the harsh clipping that is sometimes produced from Hue/Saturation."

Blend modes are also useful. "Even on a painting where the subjects are mostly in shade," says Westwood, "I will have a layer which defines a subtle or strong core shadow on the subject depending on the environment. The environment also dictates what colour the core shadow will be, and how vibrant that colour will be. That layer is blended with the Multiply mode onto the base layer before rendering to allow those shadows to interact with whatever value they're sitting on while keeping colour intact."



© Jon Westwood

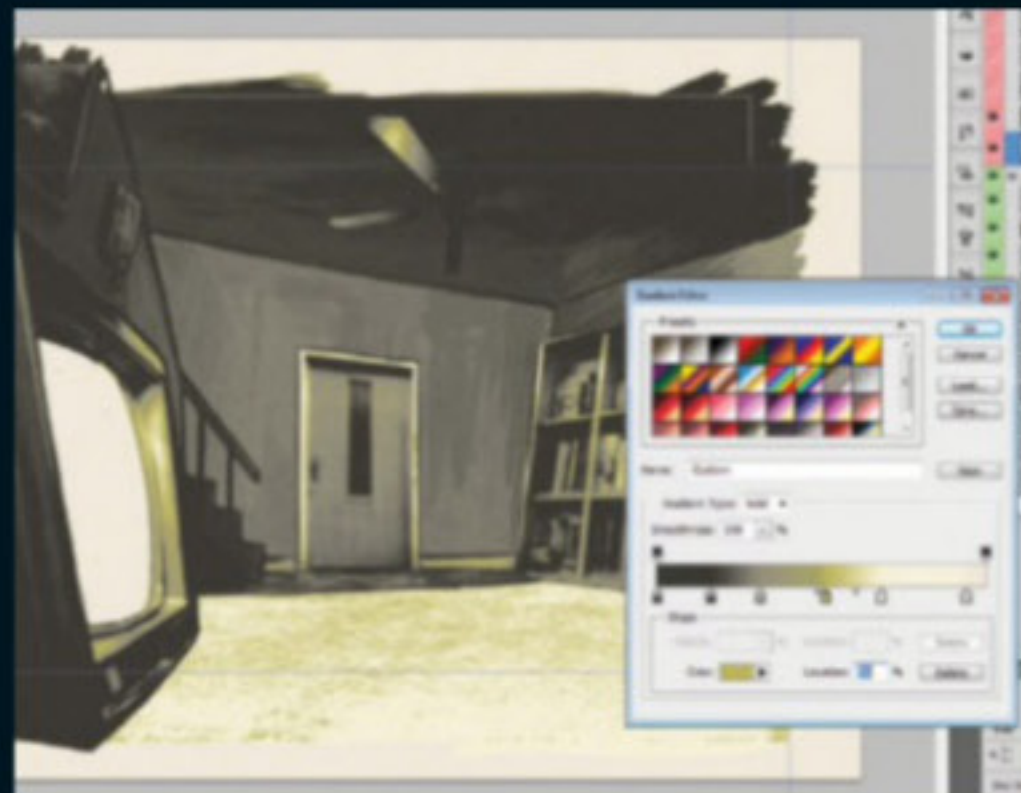
GRADIENT MAP ADJUSTMENTS

JON WESTWOOD EXPLAINS THE POWER OF A GRADIENT MAP ADJUSTMENT LAYER, WHICH CAN APPLY A COLOUR GRADUATION TO THE VALUE OF YOUR IMAGE



01 | SET YOUR SCENE

"The idea here is to try and find a way of making background scenes with a very quick turnaround time, so I transformed images from pictures I took into a loosely painted environment. While value is important, original colours don't play a role in the final image since they will be defined by the gradient map, so I don't need to worry about the mismatched colours in the composition."



02 | APPLY THE MAP

"The gradient map then gets applied to flatten and isolate the tones and colours of the original image. Everything below the Gradient Map adjustment layer will be affected by the adjustment and everything above the layer will be excluded. What sets it apart from simply desaturating and recolouring an image is its ability to apply different colours to chosen values and manipulate the colour gradation between those values."



03 | ADJUST YOUR IMAGE

"Now you can finish the composition with some miscellaneous colour and value adjustments that won't be affected by the gradient layer (in this case, a Hue/Saturation change, a little bit more colouring on the ground, and some noise to blend brush strokes)."

© Jon Westwood

USE MULTIPLE MAPS

Aaron Campbell (www.aaroncampbell.ca) likes to layer up his gradient maps to establish atmosphere in his work using colour. He explains: "In most of my pieces I use a combination of around two to four gradient maps on a variety of blend modes and adjust percentages to add just the right amount of each colour to my piece. This makes it so any colour I add to my image that's under the gradient maps will automatically be blended into the scene and will only need minor tweaking."

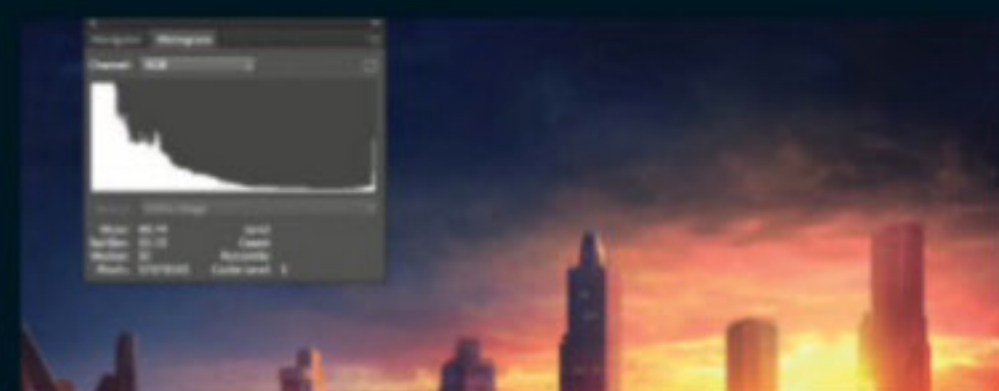
"This makes it easy for me to adjust the intensity of each gradient map that's contributing to the atmosphere, and makes it easy for me to change the mood of the piece just by changing the gradient map's colour rather than going through and changing each layer's or object's colour one by one. You can also lower the opacity of the whole folder if you want to lower your custom atmosphere all together. I find this to be a simple but effective way to tinker."

For Campbell, choosing the right colour is generally a matter of instinct, albeit one that has been honed through years of experience. For instance, he notes, "most images that have a modern or futuristic feel to them most commonly have light, clean and cooler colours with everything feeling very smooth, while retro or nostalgic images have dusty, warm and dark colours, usually with washed out darks. The tools in Photoshop really make these colour palettes very easy to achieve."



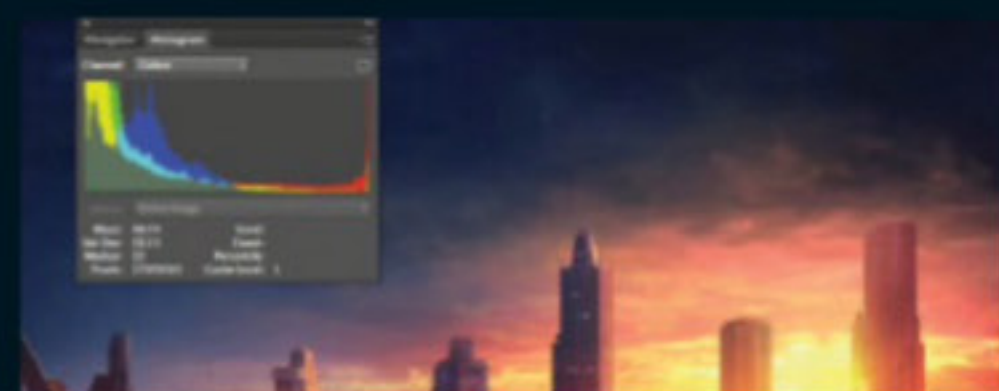
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TYPES OF HISTOGRAM AND HOW TO USE THEM



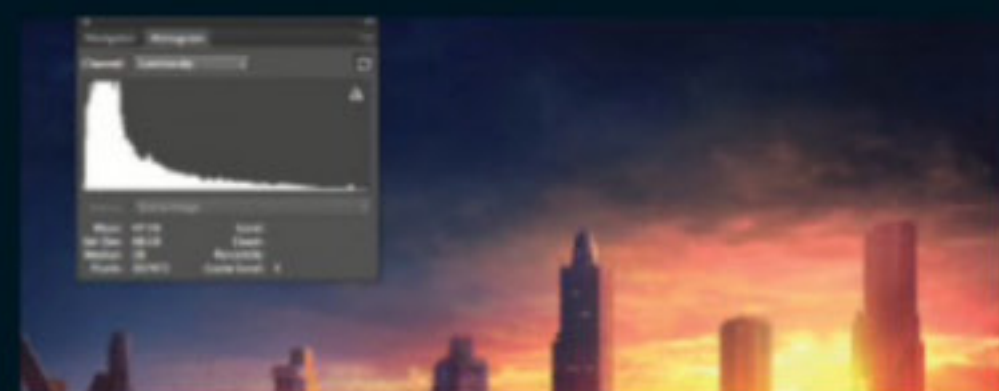
RGB HISTOGRAM

The main RGB histogram gives you an overview of the distribution of lights, darks and midtones in an image. There is no such thing as a 'good' histogram, but there are a few things to keep in mind. If you want a dark image your histogram should stack to the left, and if your image is mainly light-toned, it's stacked towards the right instead, while a midtone-based image should form a loose bridge shape with the peak in the middle. If your image has a strong contrast of light and dark, it should form a gentle U-shape dominated by peaks at the left and right.



COLORS HISTOGRAM

The Colors histogram shows you the distribution of light and dark, plus the distribution of colours in your image. When a painting's colour scheme just looks 'wrong' the Colors histogram can provide you with the reason why. You can instantly see which colours are over and under-represented and how they relate to the intensity of tones in the image. Remember – warm light, cool shadows; cool light, warm shadows!



LUMINOSITY HISTOGRAM

The Luminosity histogram monitors the brightness of your image, and to do that it takes account of how we see levels of brightness. It's a quick and easy way to check whether an image is over or under-exposed. It looks at your image pixel-by-pixel and determines whether each one is mainly red, blue or green – our eyes are more sensitive to brightness changes in green light than they are to blue or red. It's a very useful resource when you're matching light or tonal levels between multiple photos in a composite.



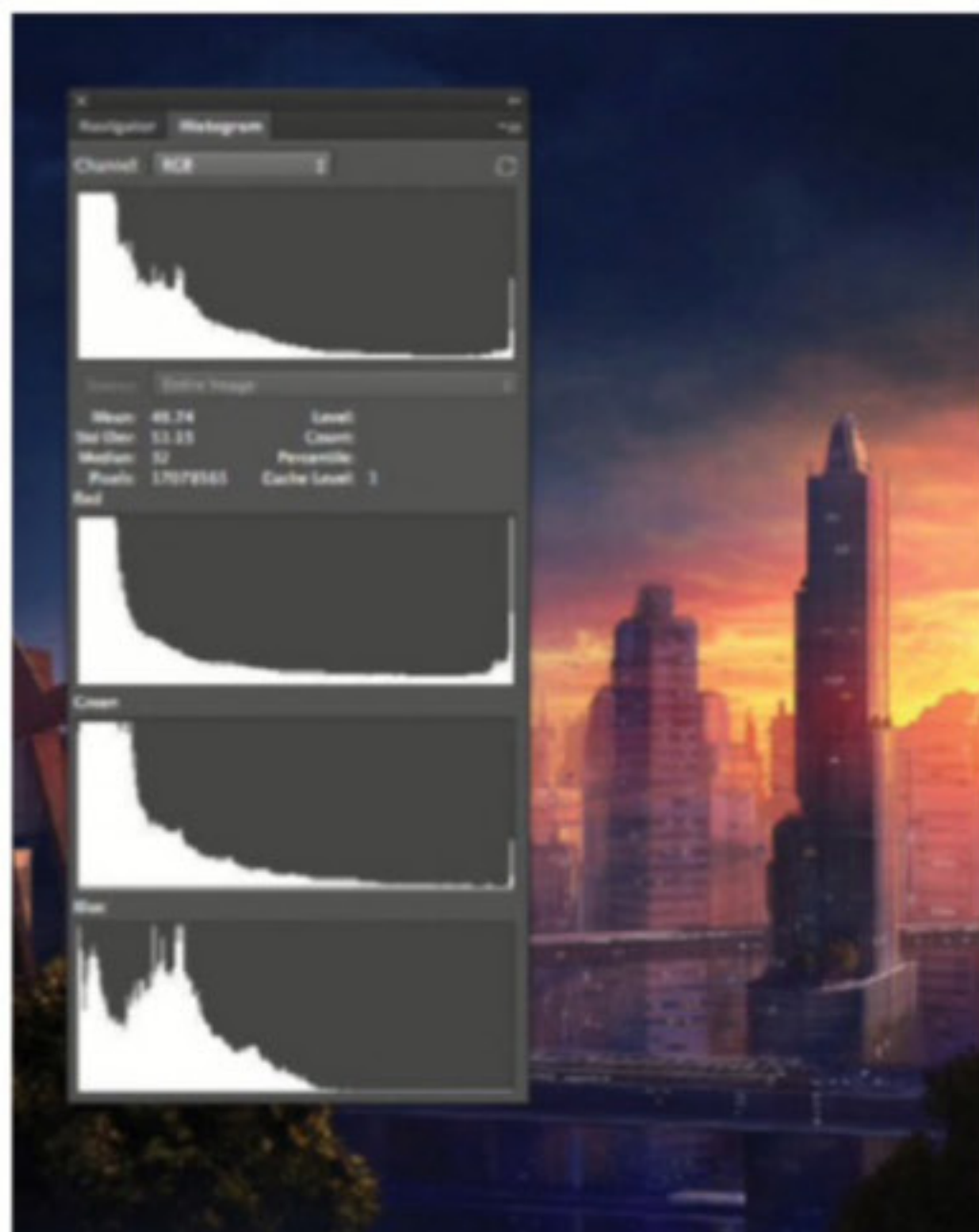
UNDERSTAND AND USE HISTOGRAMS

MAKE SENSE OF PHOTOSHOP'S COLOUR GRAPHS AND LEARN HOW TO USE THEM TO ENHANCE YOUR IMAGES

The histogram is an incredibly powerful tool for monitoring and editing colour in your images, but many Photoshop users are put off using it by its seeming complexity. The truth is that histograms are relatively simple to understand once you've got a good grasp of basic colour theory and Photoshop's other colour tools, and using the histogram enables you to take complete control of the colour and contrast in your image so that you can achieve professional results.

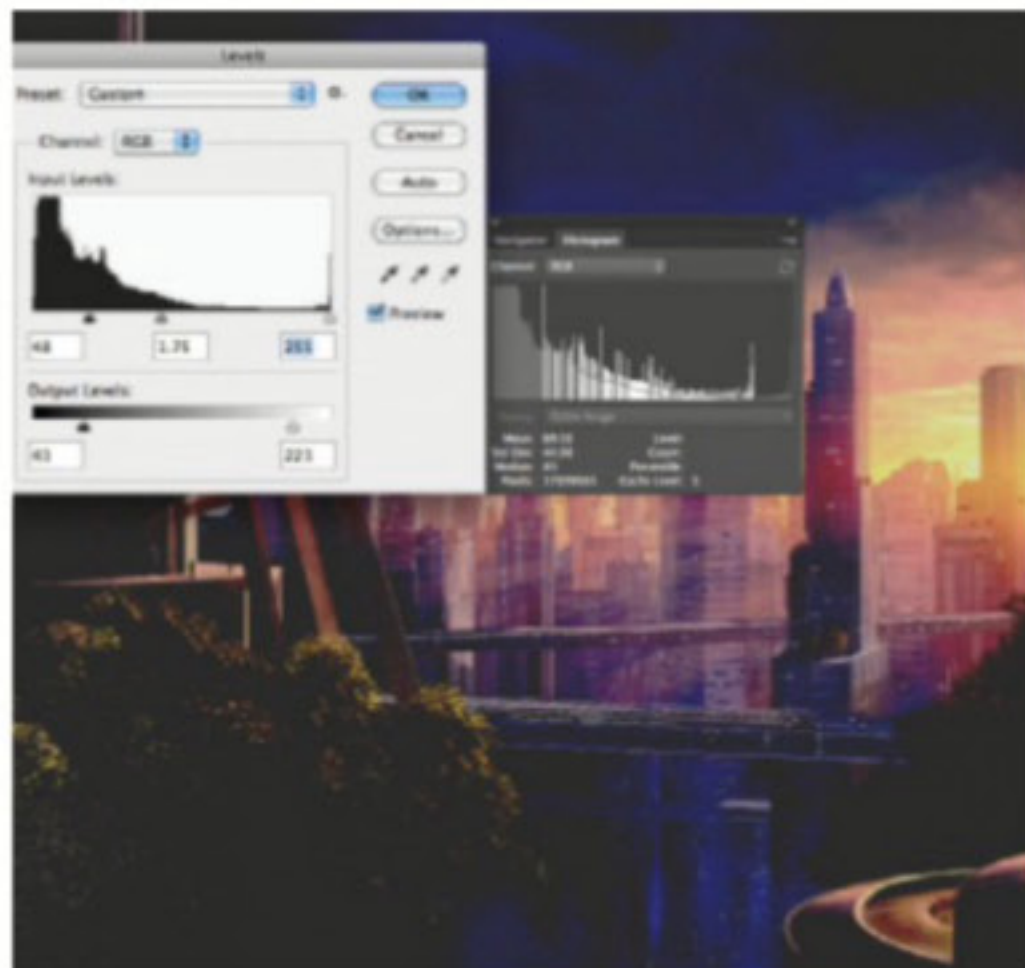
At its most basic, the histogram is simply a graph, which shows you how dark, light and midtones are balanced in your image. The left hand side shows the darkest tones, the middle

the midtones and the right hand side the lightest, brightest tones. You can display the histogram at any time by going to Window>Histogram, and control how the histogram shows you the colour and tonal distribution in your image by using the drop-down menu in the Histogram panel to select RGB, Colors or Luminosity. You can do this for the whole image, or make a selection and view an individual histogram for this part of the image alone, which is particularly useful if you're adjusting the colours in a composite. You can also get a split view of the individual Red, Green and Blue channels in your image underneath each of the types of histogram.



ALL CHANNELS

This expansion to the histogram panel lets you view the standard RGB histogram so you get an overview of the distribution of dark, mid and light tones in your image, but extends that to the Red, Green and Blue colour channels in your image so that you can view each one individually. This is an excellent way to get a full-channel drill-down of your image for channel mixing or colour grading. With the All Channels histogram open, you can click on the individual Red, Green and Blue channels to view additional information on each of the colour channels.



PREVIEW HISTOGRAM CHANGES

When you make an adjustment to colour in Photoshop, using Levels or Curves for example, you can preview what those changes will look like on the histogram. With the histogram panel open, go to your adjustment of choice and make sure that Preview is ticked. Now when you make changes, you'll see how they'll affect the histogram, giving you complete control. It's worth noting that this works via Image>Adjustments only, not on adjustment layers.

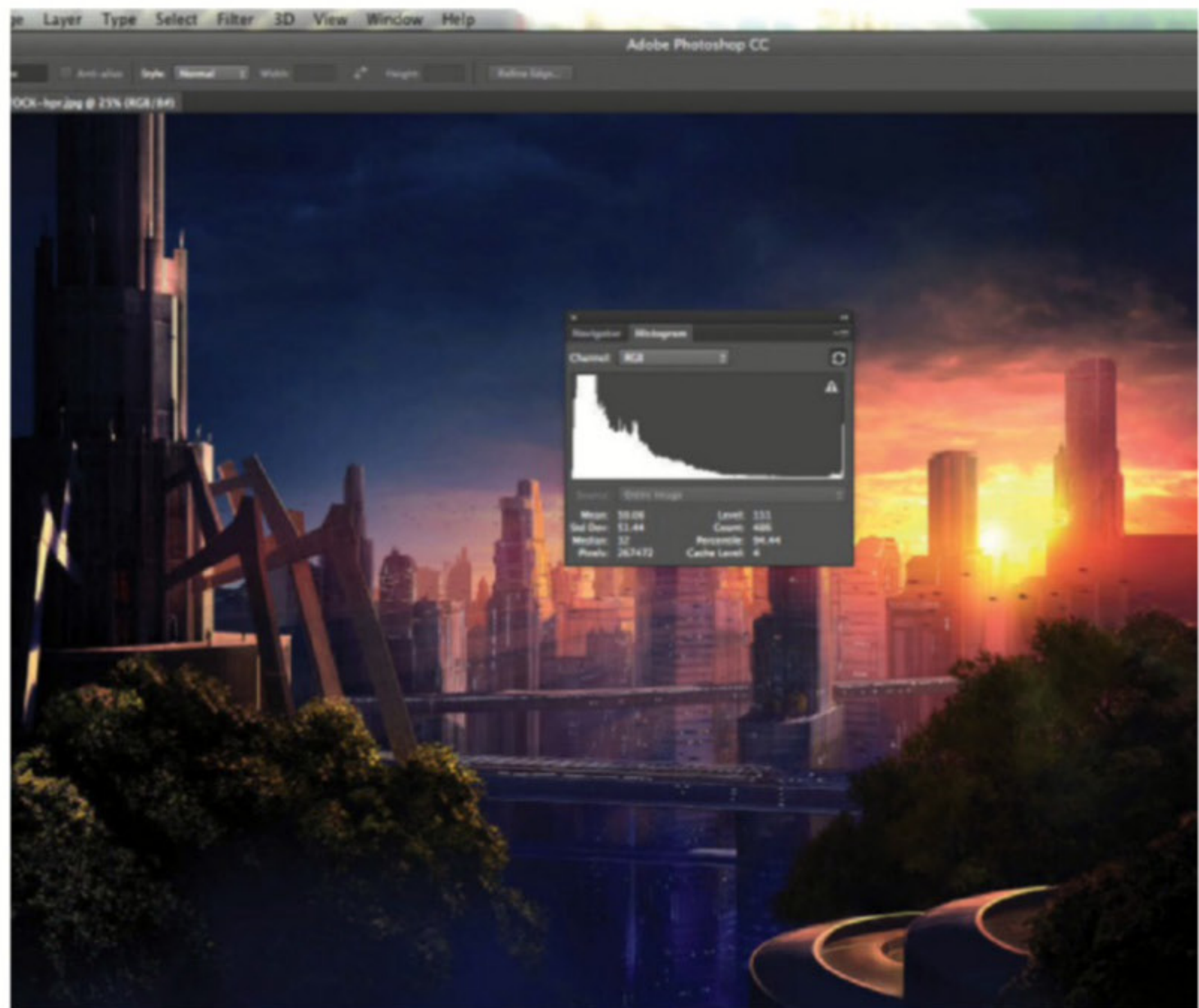


IMAGE DATA

On the left of the histogram there's some mathematical data. 'Mean' represents the overall intensity value. 'Std Dev' stands for Standard Deviation and shows you how widely the intensity values vary – a high number means a lot, a low number means a little. 'Median' represents the middle value. 'Pixels' shows you how many pixels were used to calculate the data. Then on the right

hand side, 'Levels' shows the intensity level of the area under the cursor when you mouse over the histogram, 'Count' shows the total number of pixels that correspond to that intensity value, 'Cumulative' shows the number of pixels at or below that level, and 'Cache' shows the image cache level, which governs how quickly Photoshop samples and reads the data – the higher the better!

LEVELS VERSUS CURVES

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO COLOUR TOOLS AND HOW CAN YOU MAKE THE BEST USE OF THEM?

The basic difference between Levels and Curves is that Levels allows you to correct the overall tonal balance of an image, broken down into shadows, midtones and highlights, while Curves allows you to adjust individual points in an image's tonal range. Many Photoshop users favour one or the other for adjusting images, but the truth is that they both have a place in your image-editing workflow. Both of them offer you the option to save presets so that you can apply the same adjustments to multiple images or image assets, and both allow you to drill down into colour channels to make individual adjustments. Where they differ is that generally, Levels is used to make tonal adjustments to the image as a whole, and while Curves can do this, it also allows you to make adjustments to individual tones and colours within the image without altering other parts of it.

ADVANTAGES OF LEVELS

- Brighten or darken an entire image
- Adjust colours across an image
- Boost contrast across an image
- Brighten or darken individual colour channels
- Adjust tonal range across an entire image

ADVANTAGES OF CURVES

- Adjust individual points within tonal range
- Adjust colours and tones
- Add contrast to midtones
- Change the values of black and white
- Adjust highlights, midtones and shadows individually across colour channels

HISTOGRAM TRICKS FOR CHANGING COLOURS

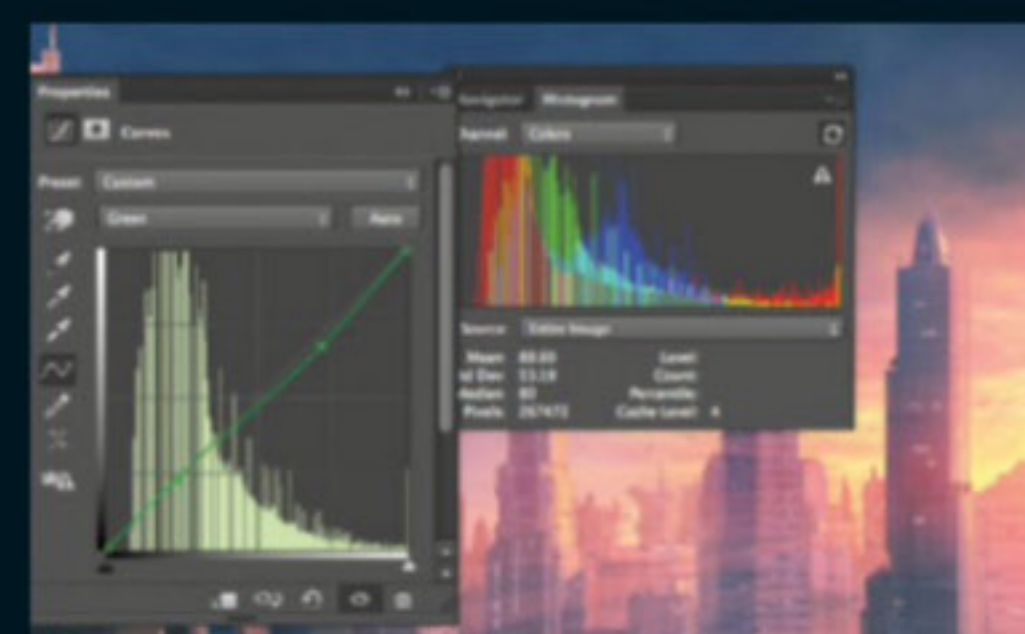
USE HISTOGRAMS TO MONITOR TONE AND COLOUR CHANGES AND TRANSFORM AN IMAGE FROM DUSK TO DAWN USING ADJUSTMENT LAYERS



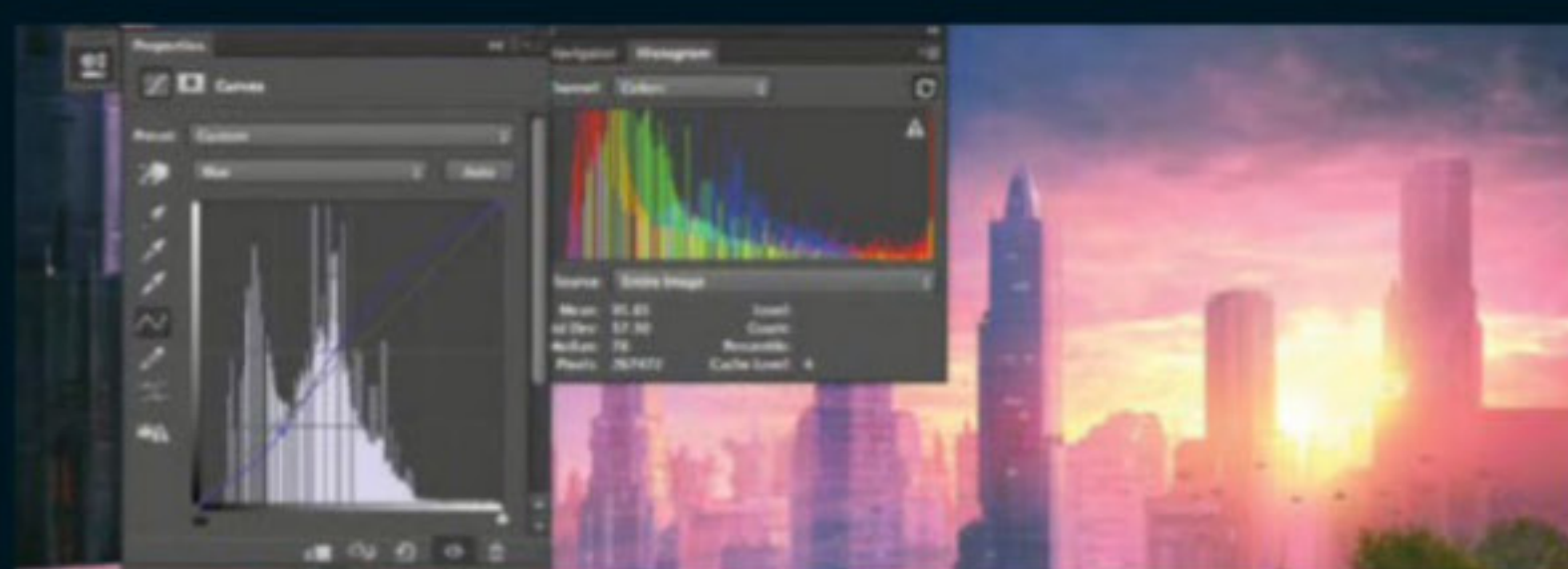
- 01 | LIGHTEN TONES WITH LEVELS**
With the histogram open (Window>Histogram) set to RGB and with Expanded View selected from the fly-out menu, open a dark-toned image, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer and choose Levels. Leave the Dark slider and Light sliders where they are and slide the Midtone slider to the left slightly. Notice how the midtone levels in the histogram leap up as the image lightens. In the Output Levels box, slide the Dark slider right to 20 to lighten the image overall.



- 02 | REDISTRIBUTE REDS WITH CURVES**
Make a new adjustment layer for Curves and set the histogram to Colors. Drop down to Red in the Curves channel menu. Most of the reds in this image are darks; to lighten them, we want some red to show in the highlights. Make a flattened S shape with the Red Curve. Notice how on the Color histogram the reds are now distributed at both extremes of dark and light, balancing out the sunlight in the image.

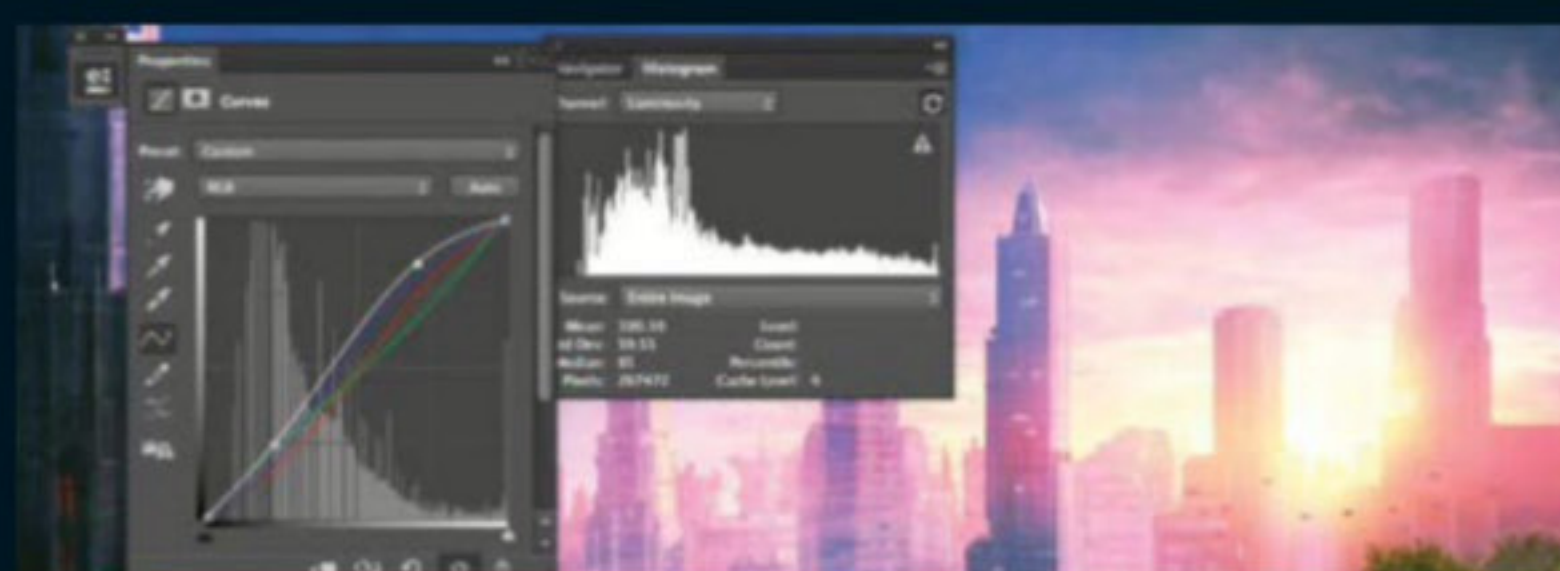


- 03 | FIX FOLIAGE WITH A GREEN CURVE**
Still in the Curves panel, select Green from the Channel dropdown, ensuring that the histogram is still set to Color. The greens in this image are mainly the dark foliage in the foreground, and we want to enhance this without getting a green colour cast in the sky. Pull the Green Curve up over the dark part of the Green histogram in the Curves panel, and down in the highlight area. Notice on the histogram how the greens are now distributed from the darkest areas to the darker midtones, and aren't present in the highlights at all.



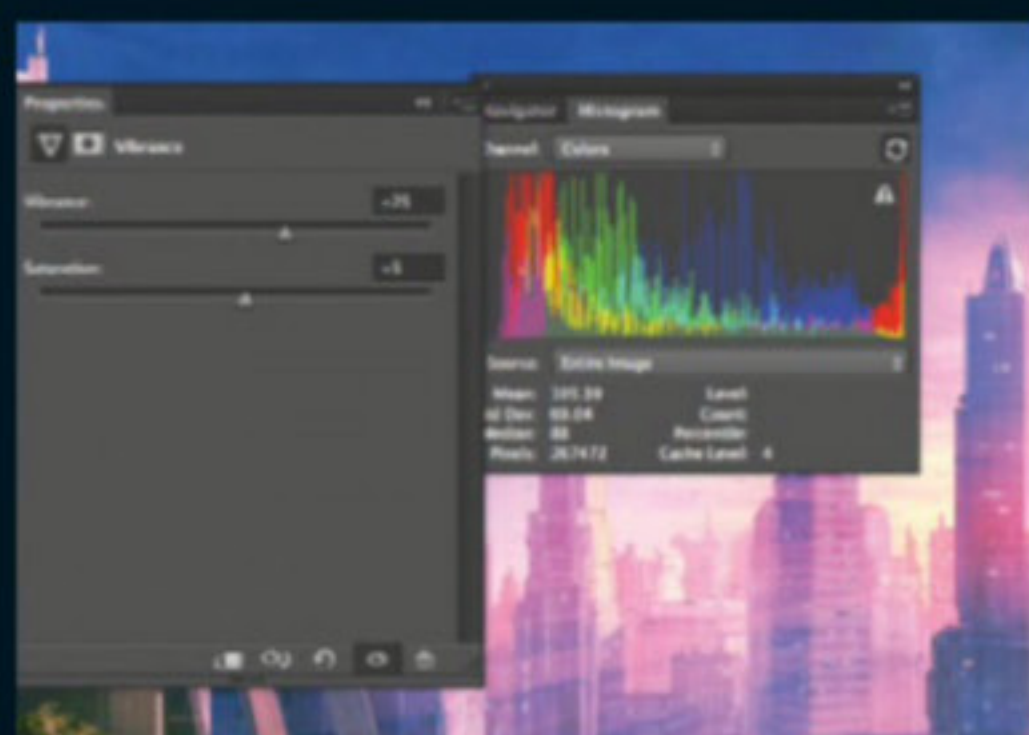
04 | TRANSFORM THE SCENE WITH A BLUE CURVE

Drop down to Blue in the Curves panel's channel menu. Make a soft S shape over the Curves histogram, pulling down between the darks and midtones and up over the brightest highlight. Notice on the Color histogram how blues dominate the midtones, giving the image an overall blue colour cast. Now the image has really begun its transformation from dark, warm, high-contrast sunset to light, cool, lower contrast sunrise.



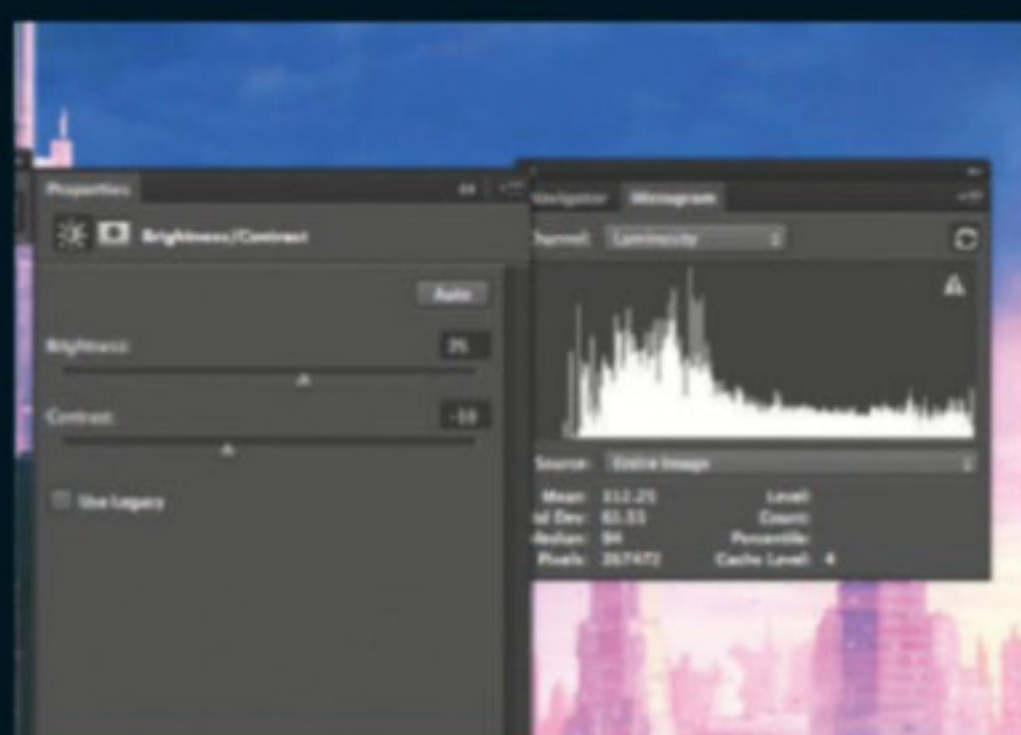
05 | LIFT LIGHTING WITH AN RGB CURVE

Switch to RGB on the Curves panel's channel menu and switch out the Color histogram for Luminosity so you're looking at the overall tonal intensity of the image. Make a gentle S shape with the topmost part of the Curve placed above the highest points on the individual RGB channels. The lower point should sit between the darks and darkest midtones on the histogram, on or just above the closest convergence of the Curves for each individual channel.



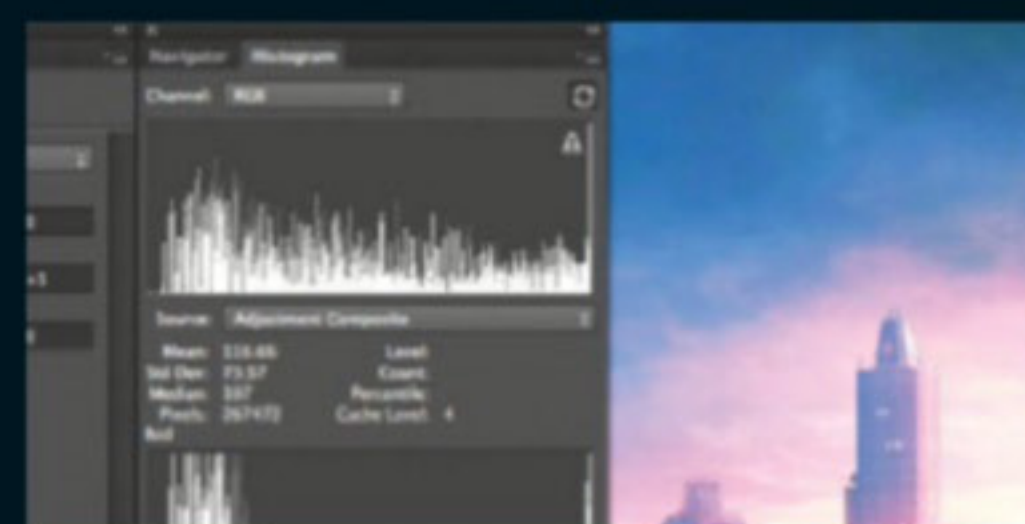
06 | BOOST COLOUR INTENSITY WITH VIBRANCE

Make a new adjustment layer, this time for Vibrance, and return to the Color histogram. On the Vibrance panel, increase the Vibrance to +25 and the Saturation to +5. You'll see that colours are more evenly distributed over the image, with more cool magenta appearing in the shadows and clearer yellow in the highlights, while blue still dominates. The image itself has a subtle, soft colour boost without being oversaturated.



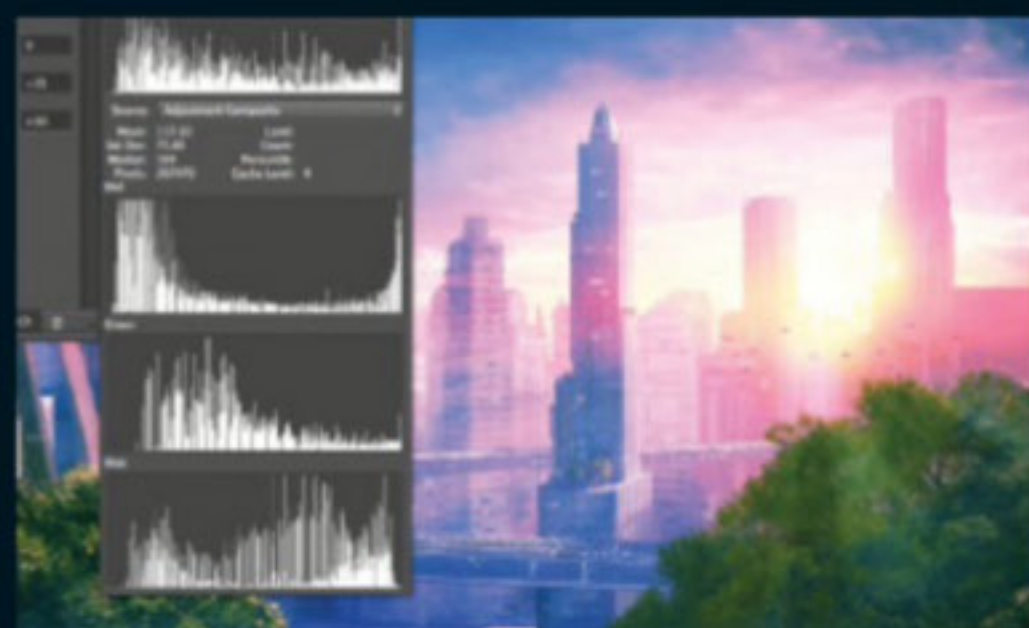
07 | LIFT LIGHTING WITH BRIGHTNESS AND CONTRAST

The image still has a bit too much darkness and contrast for a sunrise, so set the histogram back to Luminosity and make a new adjustment layer for Brightness/Contrast. Increase the Brightness to +25 and reduce the Contrast to -10. Now the Luminosity histogram shows less dramatic darks and a more even distribution between midtones and highlights, which evens out the previously high-contrast lighting and allows the colours to glow.



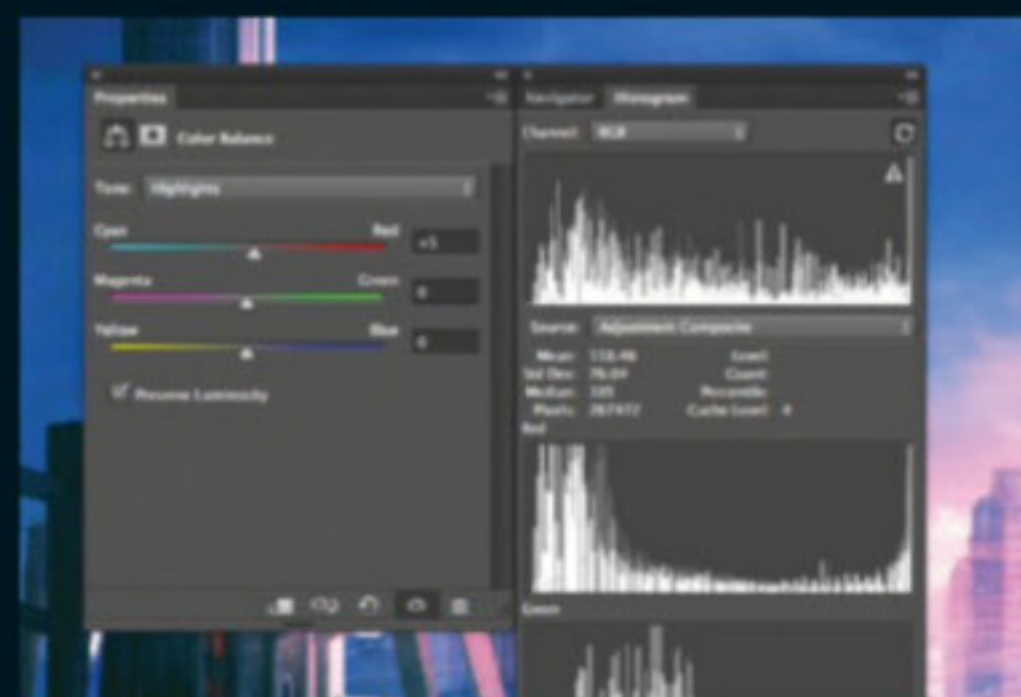
08 | BALANCE THE SHADOW COLOURS

Put the histogram back into RGB mode and use the fly-out menu on the histogram panel to switch to the All Channels view. Now make a new adjustment layer for Color Balance and choose Shadows from the tones menu in the Color Balance panel. The darkest area of our image is the green foliage in the foreground, and this is affecting how much of the colour we can actually see. Use the centre slider to boost the greens to +5. The Green channel's histogram now makes a U-shape, meaning that it's now showing contrast between the green tones and making the foliage look much more realistic.



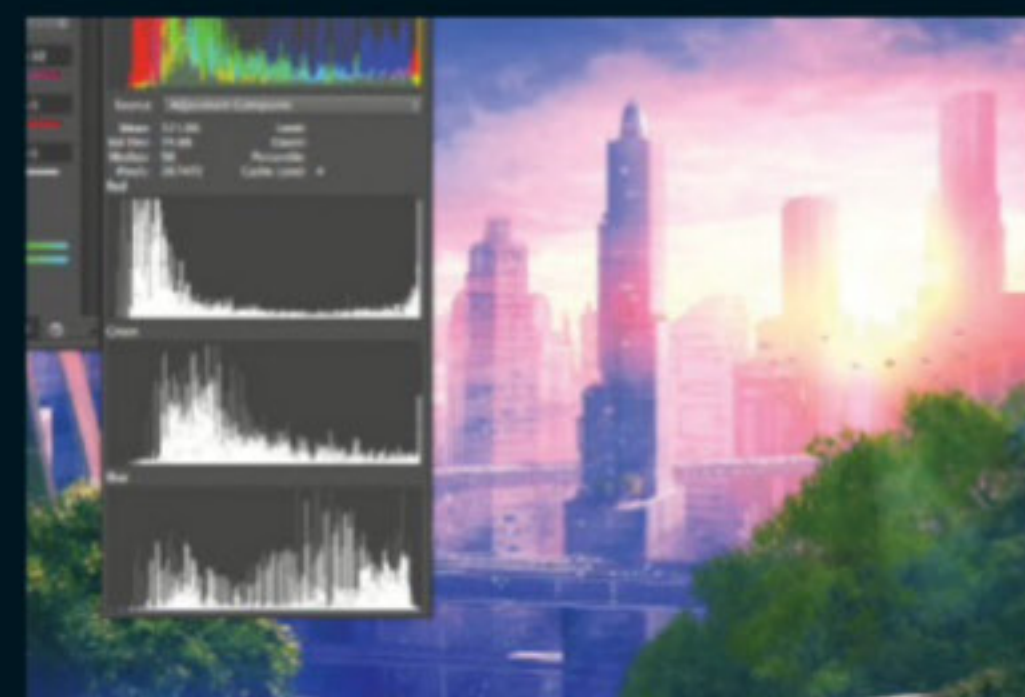
09 | BRING OUT THE MIDTONES

Choose Midtones from the Tones menu in the Color Balance panel and push the Greens up to +25 and the Blues up to +50. The image becomes bluer and cooler in tone, while on the Blue channel of the histogram you'll see that the blues have been boosted across the tonal range of the image, apart from in the deepest shadows, where blues and greens are entirely absent. This lets them contrast with the complementary orange-red shadows and highlights, which we'll adjust in the next step.



10 | INCREASE THE HIGHLIGHTS

Now choose Reds from the Tones menu and push the Red/Cyan slider up to +5 red. The reds, oranges and magentas in the image now look clearer and more saturated, while the Red channel of the histogram shows a U-shape with spikes in the shadows (which complement the overall cool tone of the image) and highlights (which warm and enhance the magenta tones of the sunrays and again, complement the overall blue-green tones of the image).

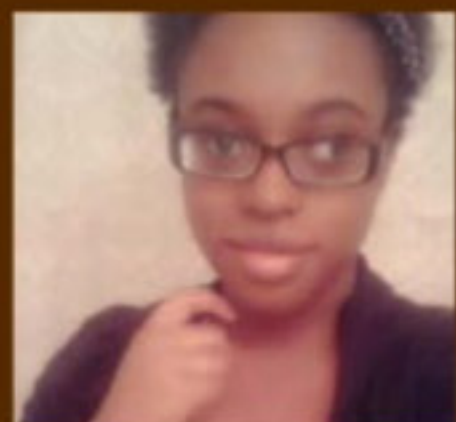


11 | ADJUST HUE/SATURATION

Switch the histogram back to Colors but leave it in the All Channels view, then make a new adjustment layer for Hue/Saturation. Shift the Hue to +10 to further enhance the cool tone of the image, boost the Saturation by +5 and increase the Lightness to +5. This brings back definition, and as you can see from the main Color histogram, balances the colours of the image in relation to how they appear in the individual channel histograms below.



© Geneva Benton



CAFFEE

GENEVA BENTON

I DIP INTO HOW GENEVA BENTON CREATED THIS DELICIOUS IMAGE

North Carolina based Geneva Benton (www.genevab.com) is a young, self-taught artist and graphic designer currently aiming to branch out into the creative industry. Her colourful digital paintings typically offer cheerful, whimsical subject matter that's guaranteed to bring a smile to your face.

This piece, Caffee, was inspired by longing for the cakes and candy featured in the illustration: "I was fasting from sweets and suddenly craved them, so instead of eating sweets I made a still life of them as inspiration," Benton explains. Such self-control resulted in a beautiful composition with distinctively Art Nouveau inspiration, but

surprisingly very few tools were used to create it. "I used mainly the Brush tool... [Using] standard Photoshop brushes, Chalk and Hard Round... And [I] used Color Balance to keep it the right shades I want while rendering it." A great example of how a simple idea, simply executed, can produce a beautiful piece of artwork.



01 INITIAL SKETCH

I start with a basic background colour and basic sketch on another layer. The Hard Round brush is mostly used for sketching.



02 FLAT COLOURS

Under the sketch layer I lay down some flat colours. They are usually colours from a colour scheme I already have in mind.

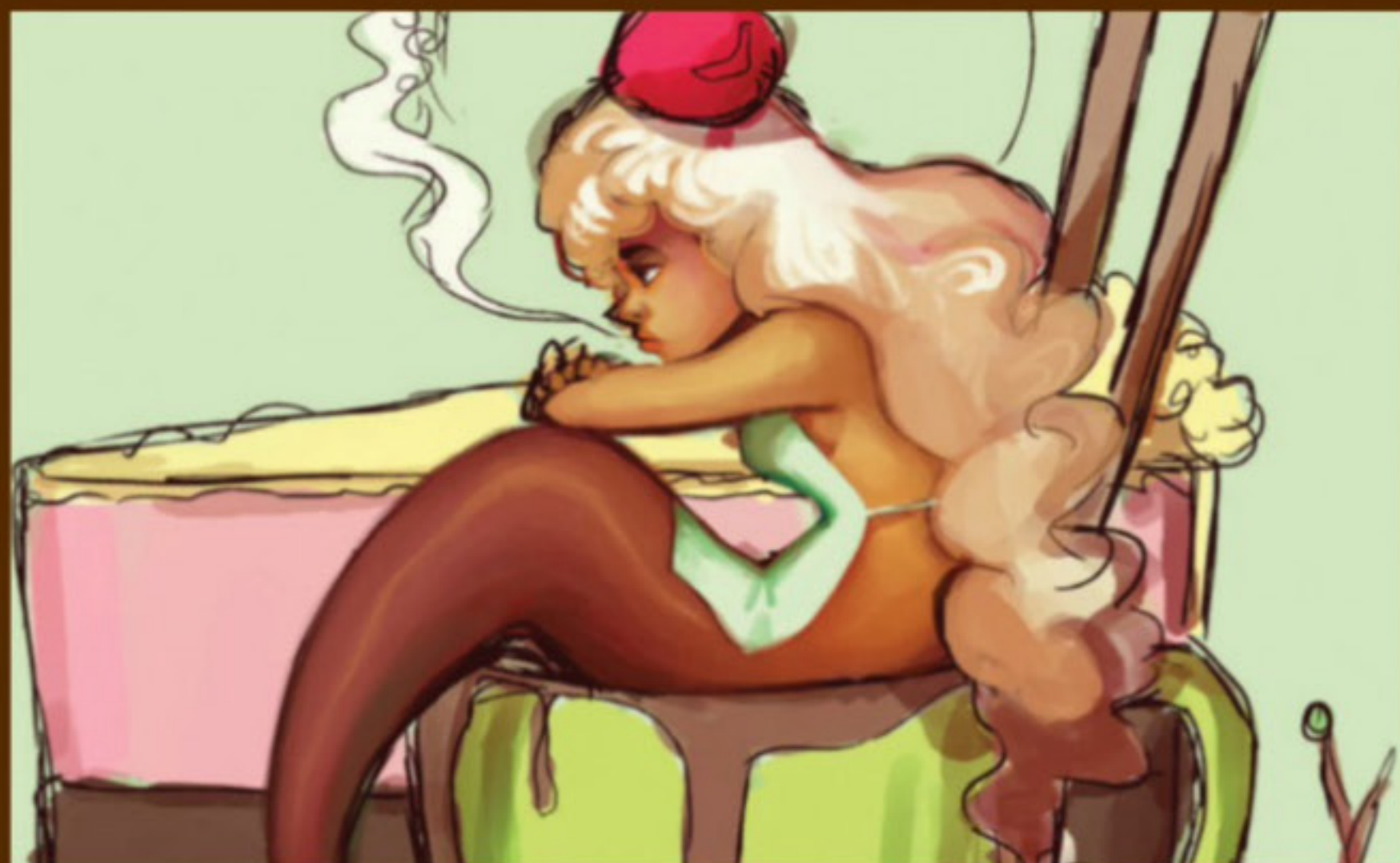
“I was fasting from sweets and suddenly craved them, so instead of eating sweets I made a still life of them as inspiration”



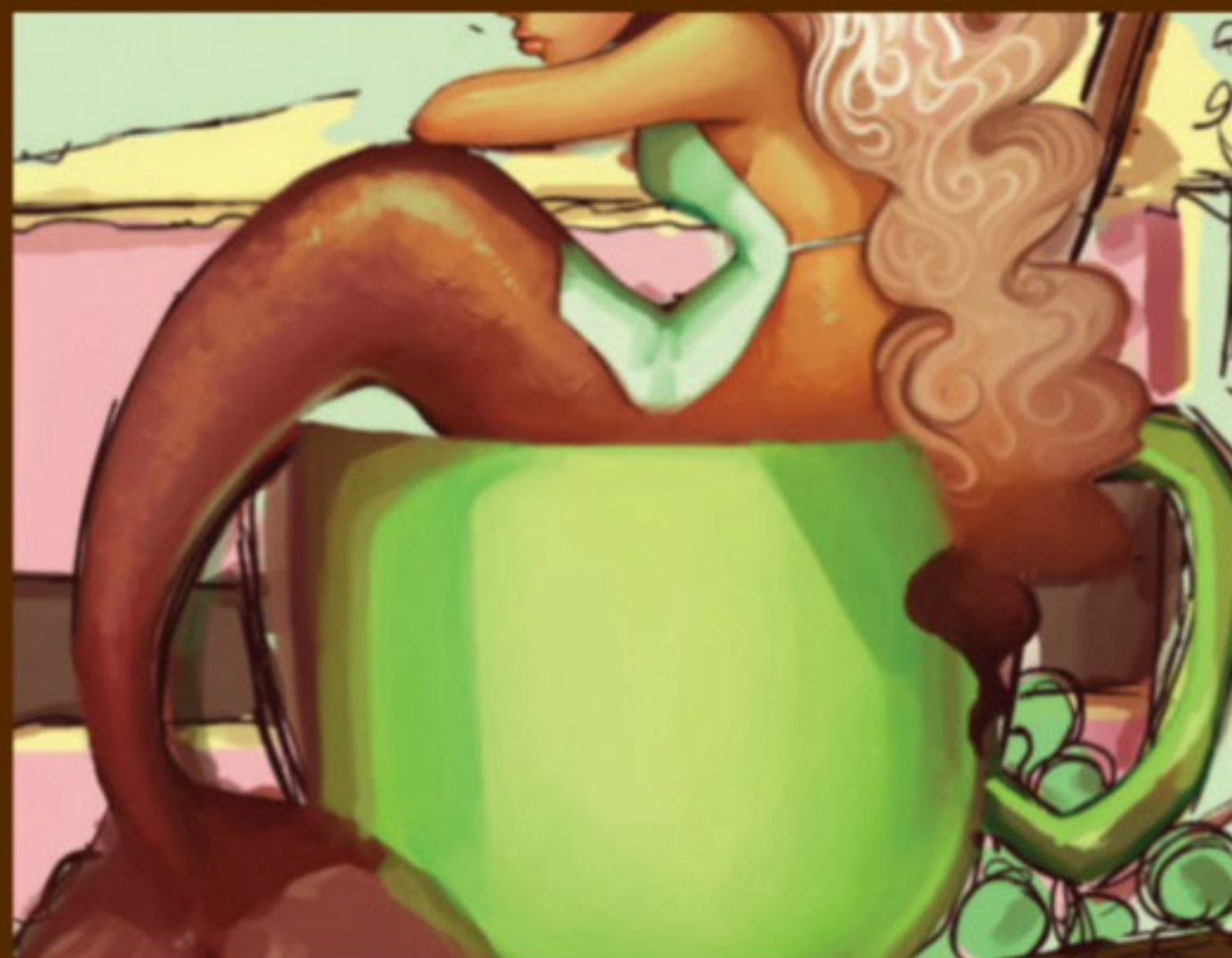
03 ROUGH SHADING

A new layer is made over the flats layer, and set to Multiply. I roughly shade with the light source in mind. Some Color Balance is used too.

- **04 | RENDERING ONE** Now to render! A layer is made over the sketch layer. I mostly use the Chalk brush with Transfer turned on. I render according to light source and nearby colours.



- 05 | RENDERING TWO** Continuing to render. Some colours used in shading are brought in from other sections of the art or are brought in with the Color Picker.



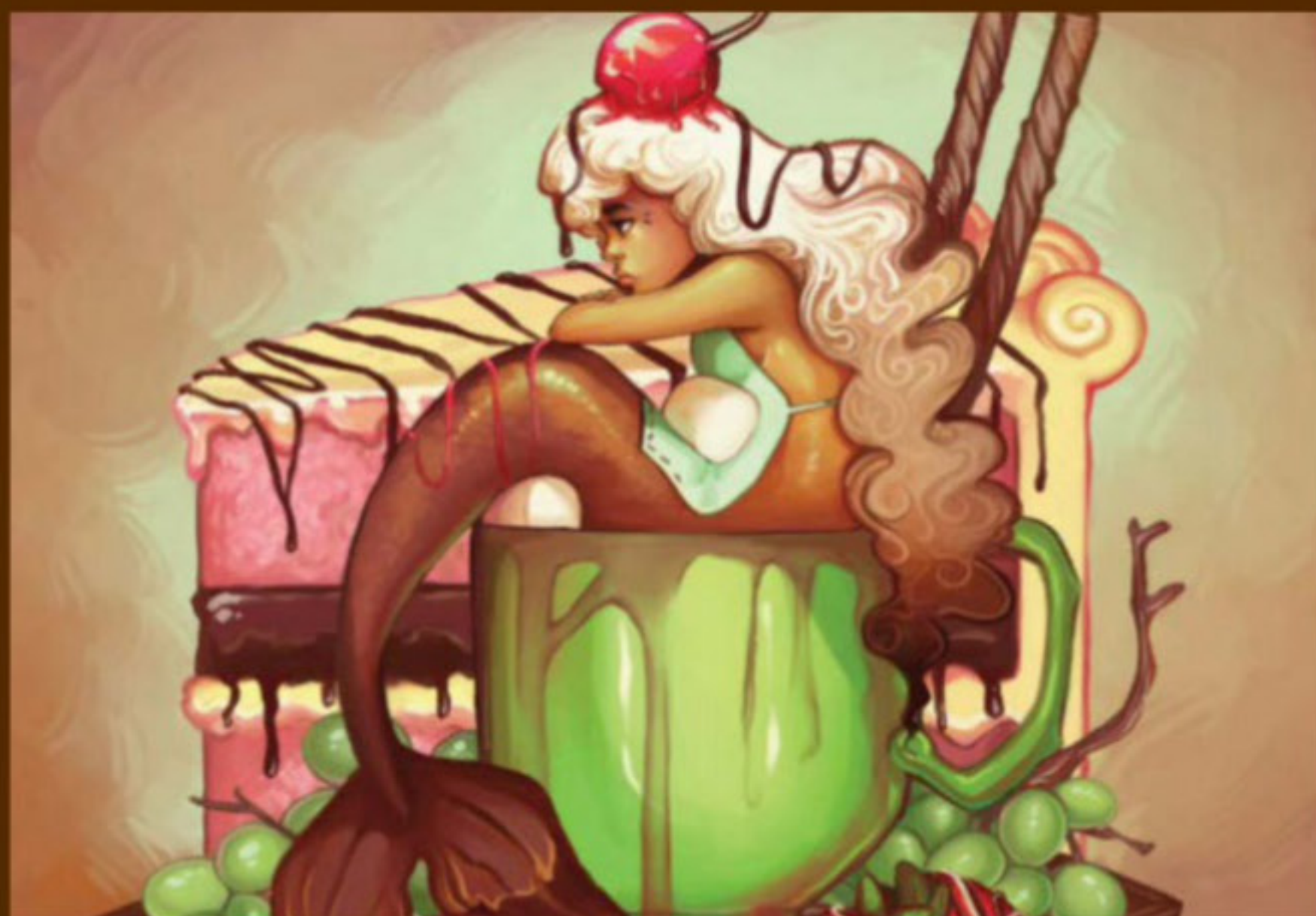
- 06 | RENDERING THREE** I continue painting in and adding a few more details on some new layers. A few objects have been rearranged and the background tone has been set in.



- 07 | THE FINER DETAILS** Now I add in some finer details with a smaller Chalk brush and the Hard Round brush. I have also masked out the old sketch guidelines that were poking through.



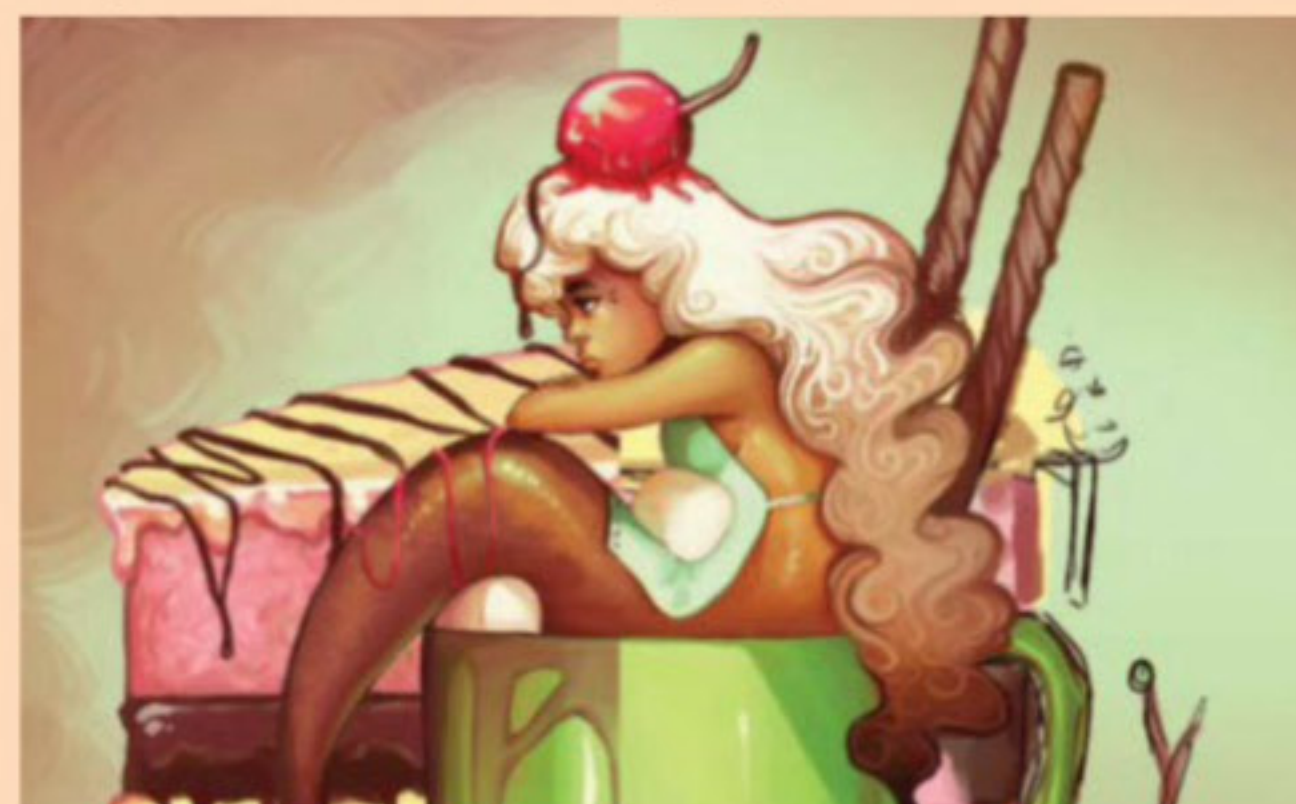
- 08 | FINISHING TOUCHES** More details are added and the overall image cleaned up. Some layers are merged together to make it easier to fix or colour over areas if needed in the future.

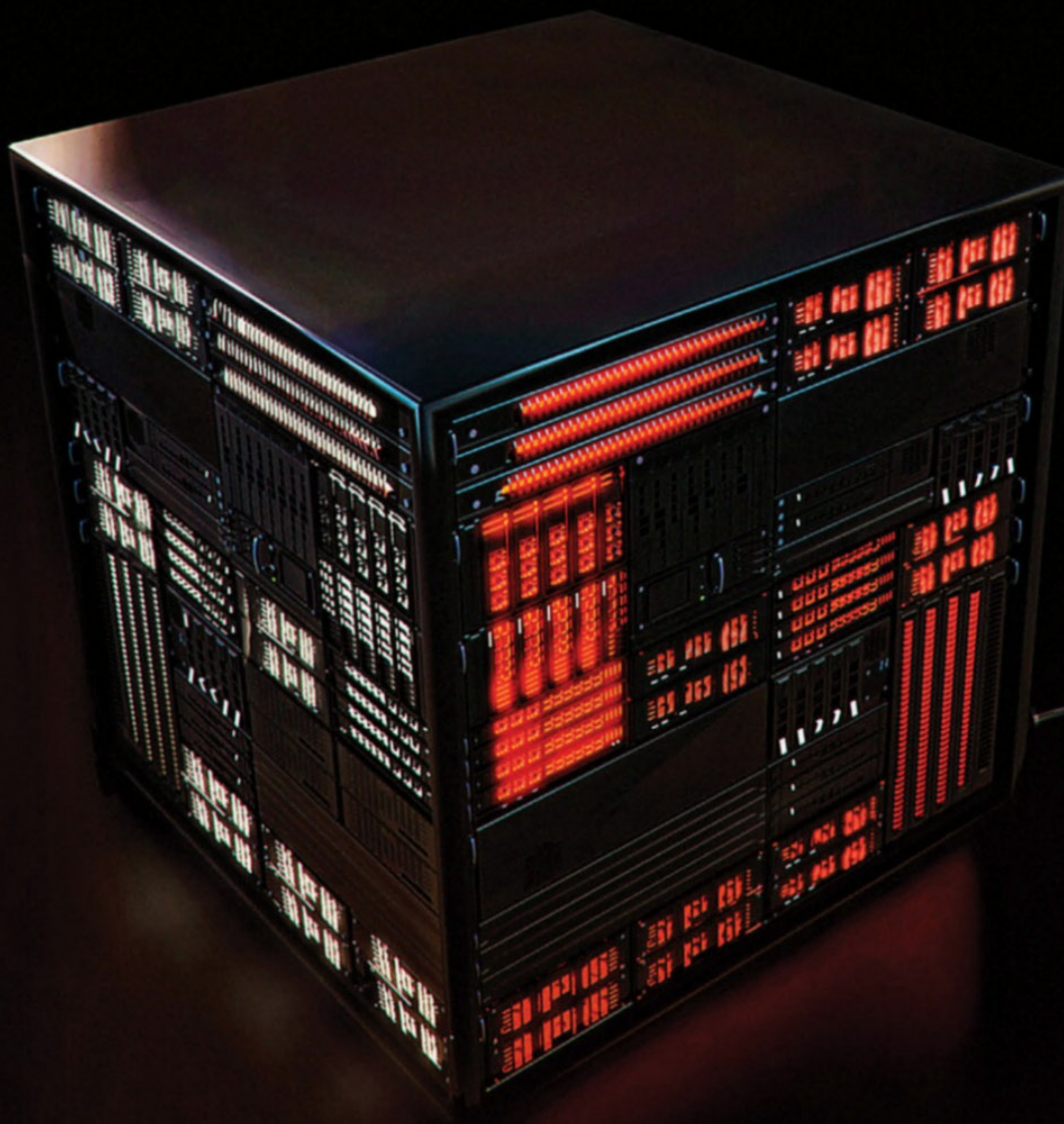


STILL LIFE

INSPIRATION FROM ANOTHER ART STYLE

Geneva Benton says that she wanted this piece to look like a classic still life – the old-fashioned kind featuring food and drink – and the composition and the colour scheme were directly influenced by that idea. This is great proof that even the most unlikely sources of inspiration can pay off, as the final piece looks cool and contemporary.





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CREATE WITH CC APPS

USE THE ADOBE CC SUITE ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE
AND TABLET TO SKETCH ON THE GO AND THEN
INTEGRATE IT INTO PHOTOSHOP TO CREATE
STUNNING DIGITAL ARTWORK

“In an era where everybody carries a smart phone
equipped with a decent camera it's easier than ever to
explore the world and capture images wherever we go”

Preparation is everything in the world of digital painting. The more time we have to gather references, figure out our composition, test palettes and sketch ideas before starting a new painting the more enjoyable and less stressful the process will be. In an era where everybody carries a smart phone equipped with a decent camera it's easier than ever to explore the world and capture images wherever we go. Even better is that we're starting to see more and more applications, which allow us to take that information and edit it on the spot, speeding up the creation process and making that preparation stage easier than ever.

Adobe offer a great suite of applications for the iPhone and iPad which can help you prepare for your next masterpiece without being tied to your workstation, and they all integrate seamlessly with each other and with Photoshop

via Creative Cloud. You can photograph landscapes and turn the colour information into a palette using Color, or capture objects around the house and make digital brushes out of them in Brush, then simply open Photoshop and import that information at the touch of a button. You can share your work between applications, sketching ideas on the train in Sketch then transferring them to Line for some detailed linework before bringing the full composition into Draw for refinement and a colour pass (using the colour information you obtained earlier, of course). It's a slick process and one which is especially useful if you find yourself travelling or simply have a sudden burst of inspiration on the bus one day.

In this feature we will learn how to use the Adobe suite to prepare tools and a sketch to take into Photoshop in order to create a dramatic digital landscape painting. You will see how, by taking your time, sketching, researching and using reference

photos, the process of creating artwork becomes less intimidating and more accessible. We will cover each application individually and go over how to use them, tips and tricks to get the most out of them and how to make them talk to each other, then how to export your files onto the cloud and into desktop applications such as Photoshop. Along the way you'll pick up additional tidbits of information such as how to use custom shapes imaginatively, how to sketch an interesting composition and use basic colour theory to your advantage. All of these lessons will teach you to become a more thoughtful, prepared artist, something which is incredibly useful in the world of concept art and illustration for the entertainment industries.

All you require to get going is an iPhone, iPad, a copy of Adobe Photoshop and some coffee to fuel your adventures (this is optional). Let's get started with Adobe apps!

ADOBE BRUSH

TURN PHOTOGRAPHS OF DOODLES OR OBJECTS INTO DIGITAL BRUSHES USING ADOBE BRUSH, THEN IMPORT THEM INTO PHOTOSHOP FOR TWEAKING



USE YOUR BRUSH IN SKETCH AND PHOTOSHOP

IMPORT YOUR NEW BRUSHES INTO PHOTOSHOP AND TRY THEM OUT

At this stage we have a variety of brushes sitting in Adobe Brush – time to get them into Photoshop to. Access your CC Library by going to Window>Libraries; this will pop up a panel containing everything you have synced with the Cloud. Click one of the brushes and try scribbling around on a canvas to get a feel for it. If you want to further tweak a brush open the Brush panel, also under Window, and play with the settings – remember to save this as a new pre-set by clicking the button in the bottom right of the panel. This will add it to your current brush set. Try creating several different brushes from the same shape and experiment with scattering and stroke spacing to get different results.



▶ Adobe Brush is one of our favourite applications in the Adobe Suite. It allows you to import photographs of anything, be it scribbles on a sketchpad, objects of interest, pet ferrets or real painted brushstrokes, and turn them into brushes which are compatible with Photoshop or the other applications in the suite. Within the app you can easily tweak settings to create the perfect brush for a specific job, adding scatter, for example, or pressure sensitivity, and these settings can be expanded to an even greater degree in Photoshop itself.

For this we'll keep it simple; take some pens, pencils and any other traditional media you like (charcoal is fantastic) and doodle some interesting marks on a blank sheet of paper. Try to space them out so that you can photograph each mark individually and photograph them under natural light if you can – you want as much contrast as possible to separate your doodle from the paper. Because the software is so powerful and you are able to tweak so many values, almost anything can work as a brush; experiment and have fun

with this stage and always think about what you would like the end result to look like. If you are looking for a traditional media effect try creating paintbrush-like marks using pens, or use an actual brush or palette knife.

Once you have photographed each doodle you can import it into Adobe Brush. Click the plus button at the bottom to add a photo from your Camera Roll, and then choose Photoshop as the target. Use Crop and Refine to clean the image up, removing any unwanted information, then hit Next to access additional settings. Keep an eye on the preview image at the top of the screen – this shows you how the brush will look when applied. Remember, you can change any of these settings in Photoshop so you don't need to get it perfect. Once you are happy with your new brush hit Save and it will be added to your library.

To access your brushes in Photoshop open the Window tab and select Libraries. Here you will find all synced data from your Adobe suite including Brushes, Color Themes and more. Select a brush by clicking on it and you can now use it as normal.

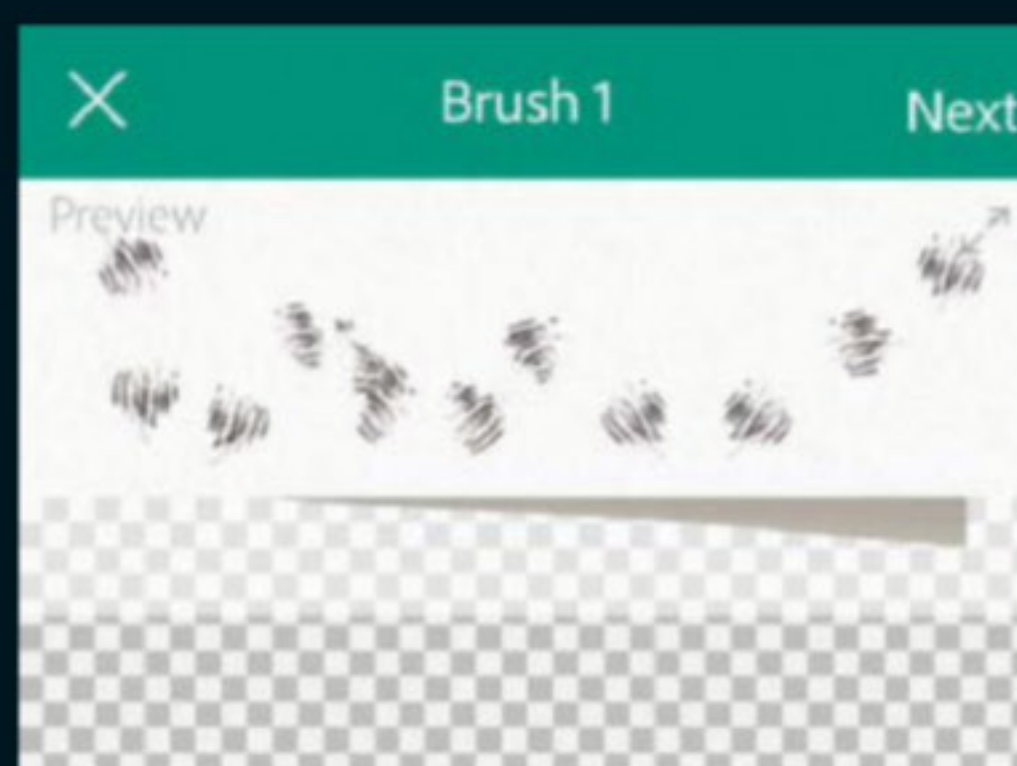
“Because the software is so powerful and you are able to tweak so many values, almost anything can work as a brush; experiment and have fun with this stage”

MAKE A PHOTOSHOP BRUSH

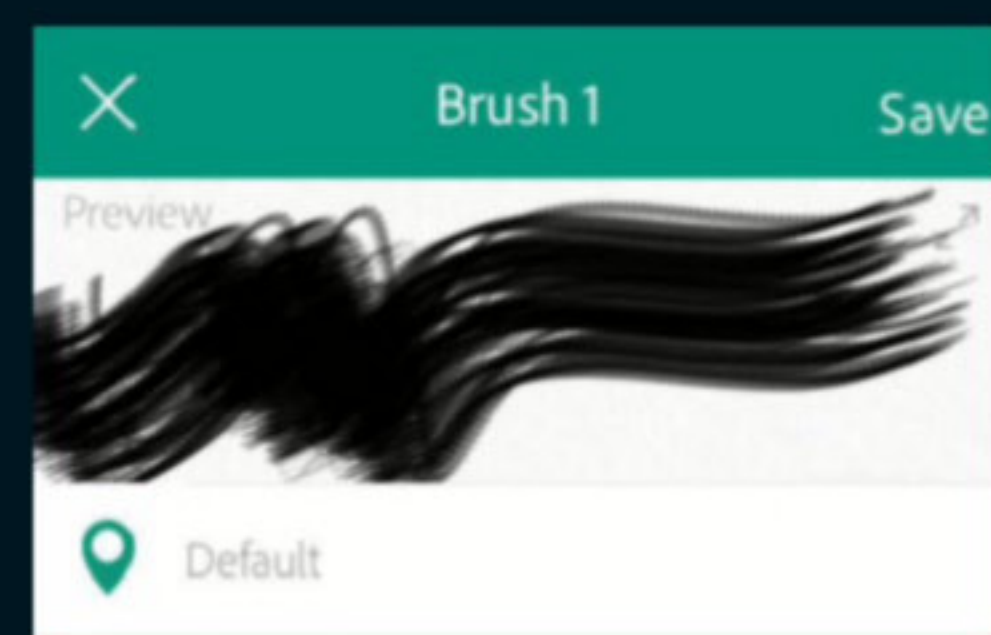
TURN A SERIES OF DOODLES ON PAPER INTO INTERESTING CUSTOM PHOTOSHOP BRUSHES IN MINUTES



01 | SCRIBBLE SOME BRUSH SHAPES
With a pen and paper draw some interesting brush shapes. Try to think of tools you might find useful in Photoshop – soft round pencils, hard square shapes, textures and gradients. Look at real brush strokes and try to draw them. Even try mimicking your favourite Photoshop brush in your own creative way.



02 | CROP AND REFINE YOUR BRUSHES
Use Crop to remove any unwanted marks, bringing your brush shape to the centre. The Refine slider will attempt to remove the background from your photo in order to focus on the brush shape you have created, experiment to get the best balance.



03 | TWEAK SETTINGS TO GET THE BEST RESULT
This is the fun part. Play with the size of your brush, whether it's affected by pen pressure, the spacing of the strokes, scattering and jitter. These settings let you tailor the brush to your exact specification and allow you to get different results from the same shape.

ADOBE COLOR

SAMPLE COLOUR SCHEMES FROM ANY PHOTOGRAPH WITH ADOBE COLOR, THEN IMPORT THEM INTO PHOTOSHOP TO USE IN YOUR DIGITAL PAINTINGS



“Start by figuring out what sort of mood you want to create. Think about what you want to tell the viewer about the world you are painting”

Colour defines the mood of your painting. Choosing a strong colour palette is one of the most important aspects of creating affecting artwork and one which can be initially daunting. A great way to start is to work with a limited palette, just a few colours which work well together, and Adobe Color makes it easy to create such a scheme by allowing you to pull the colours directly from a photograph.

Start by figuring out what sort of mood you want to create. Think about what you want to tell the viewer about the world you are painting – is it scary and dark? If so perhaps a cold, blue/green palette would be appropriate. Is it oppressively hot and aggressive? Reds and oranges would make sense in this scenario. For this tutorial we want to create an invitingly warm, sunny spring day, so spend some time finding photographs that match the image in your head. We are going to see lots

USE YOUR CAPTURED COLOUR PALETTE IN PHOTOSHOP AND CC APPS

In Photoshop you will find your new Theme under the Libraries panel. Click on the colours to select them and try sketching a little to see how they work together – this is a nice chance to play with your new brushes and get comfortable with the setup. A quick colour study of your reference photo can be a great way to get a feel for them.

As an additional step you can save swatches of these colours to access later by

of warm yellows, greens and some saturated blue tones, so try looking at images of meadows or Nordic valleys. Ideally you should shoot these photos yourself, this will give you more control over the end result, but you can also find great stock images online.

Open Adobe Color and click the plus button to create a new colour theme, then select your chosen photograph. The app will instantly identify major colours in the composition (highlighted by circles) and place swatches at the top of the screen. You can

opening the Swatch panel under the Window tab – the advantage of using swatches is being able to name each colour for ease of use. It's good practice to name your swatches after the section of the photograph that they came from, for example 'sky' or 'mountain_shadow'. To save a new colour to your swatch panel simply select your colour from the theme, click the plus icon under your Swatch panel and give it a name.

move the circles around to select your ideal colour setup, as well as altering what colours the app will choose based on your preferred mood by touching the smiley face in the bottom right hand corner. This is a powerful tool, allowing you to pull different colour setups from the same photograph. For this tutorial we want a bright, colourful environment so stick with the default setting. When you are happy with the swatches simply press the tick and give your new theme a name – it will be uploaded to the Cloud, accessible from Photoshop.

ADOBE SKETCH

USE ADOBE SKETCH ON THE IPAD TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUR NEW PAINTING WITH LINE ART AND A VALUE STUDY



► There are several sketching apps available on the iPad, each offering different levels of complexity. Adobe Sketch is deliberately simple and stripped back, clearly aiming to be as easy to use as possible for artists of any level, featuring a very small selection of tools including a digital Pen, Pencil and Eraser. Because of this it can feel a little light on functionality, but it does adequately replicate the feeling of carrying around a sketchpad with a few pens, which was clearly Adobe's intent. Crucially for us it integrates nicely with the other apps in the Adobe suite allowing the user to export documents directly to Draw, Line or even Photoshop itself as a PSD file.

Before you start sketching, organise any reference images you may have so that they're easy to view when you need them. If you are travelling it's worth saving your images your Photo Library so you can quickly switch applications while you work. Having some reference material will help you render more realistic environments but try not to over-use them if possible – training your imagination is as important as learning to study an image.

Start by defining the horizon line of the image.

From there start sketching loose lines to indicate where the mountains will be and work forwards. There are no rules to this stage; relax and place lines where you think they make sense. Studying composition is always useful as it can help you place objects in the environment in visually appealing areas of the image. I'm using lots of diagonal lines to add energy and interest to the composition and making sure to overlap shapes, which helps to give the environment depth.

Adding rough values to your sketch will help you to understand how the light falls in the environment and save you time later on – use shades of grey painted with the larger brush to separate different areas of the composition. It's worth looking at your reference photos to see how light and shade work under the lighting conditions chosen.

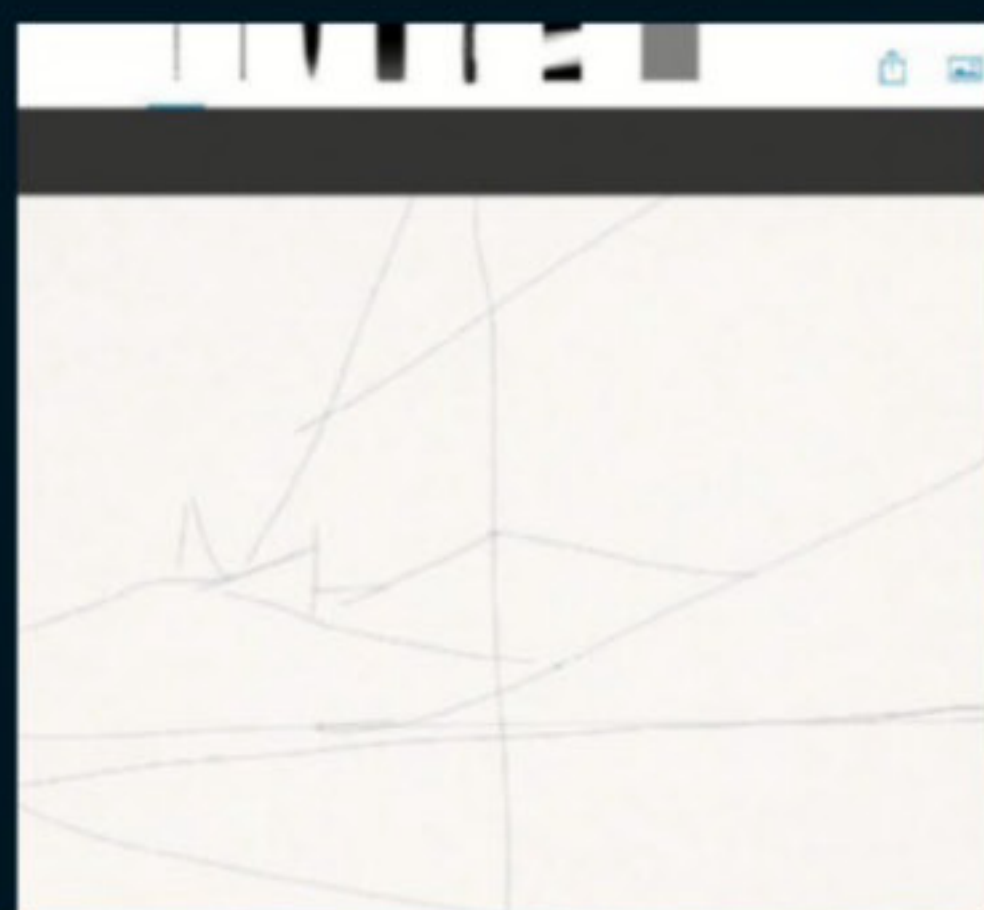
While you can sketch on the iPad using your fingers it's definitely worth investing in a decent stylus – this will dramatically increase your accuracy and general comfort and can give you an experience not dissimilar to working on a graphics tablet. There are several models available so be sure to read reviews and



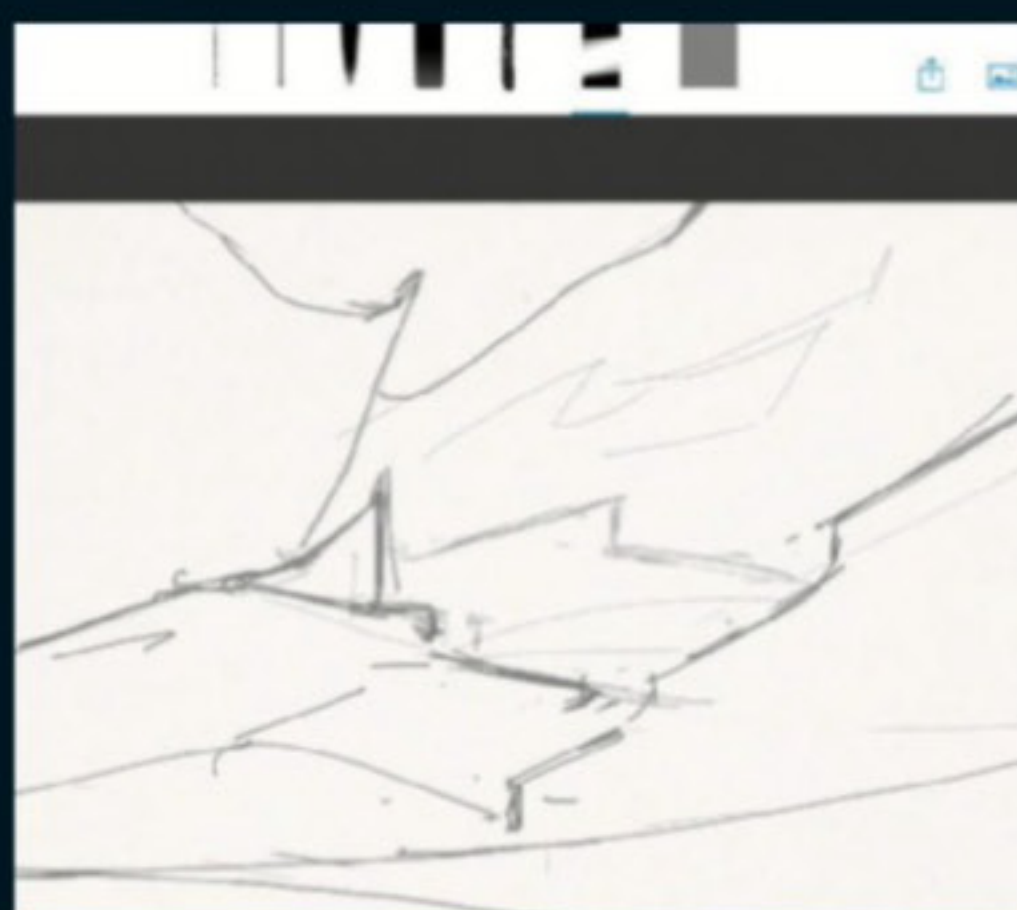
“Adding rough values to your sketch will help you to understand how the light falls in the environment and save you time later on”

SKETCH YOUR COMPOSITION

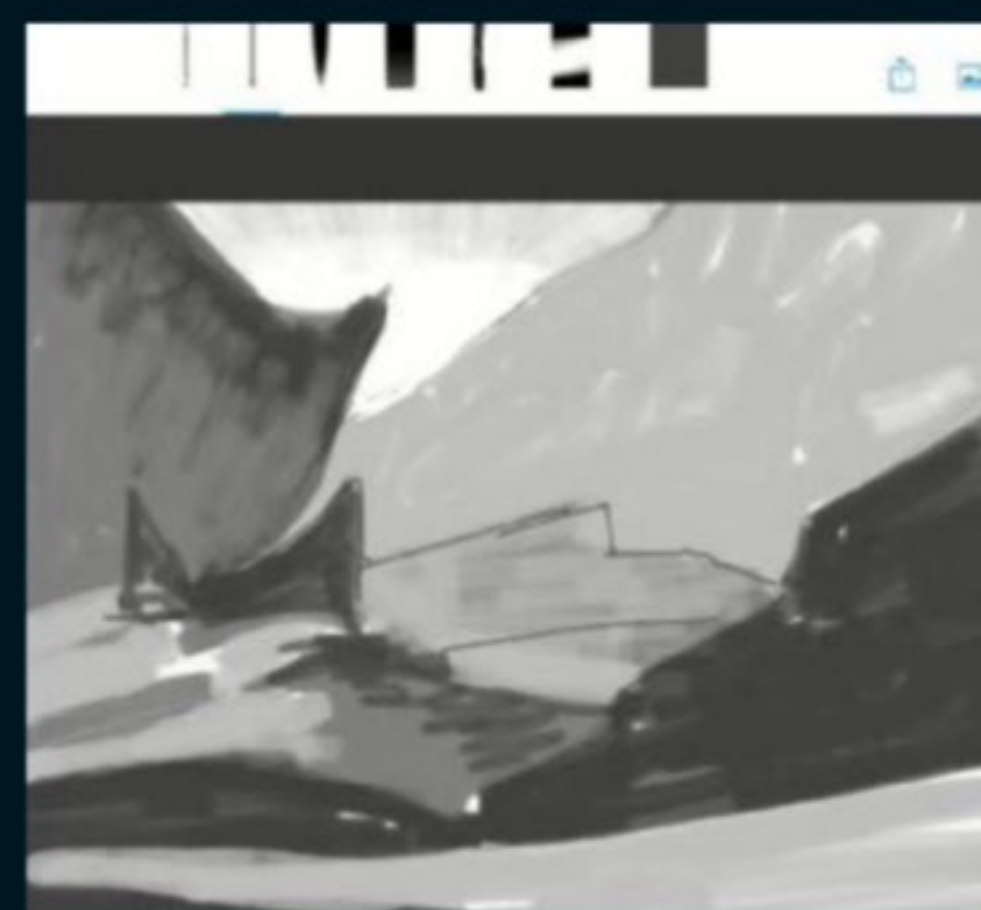
DRAW YOUR LANDSCAPE AND USE REFERENCE TO HELP YOU PAINT IN THE VALUES IN SKETCH



01 | LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS Begin by drawing the horizon line. A low horizon tends to make your image look more dramatic as larger objects become exaggerated. Once that's in place begin to loosely define the main areas of the image – use your reference images to generate ideas if you get stuck or want some inspiration.



02 | REFINE YOUR SKETCH Start to refine the image, using your exploratory marks to guide you through the composition. Use bold shapes, diagonal lines cutting through the landscape give it a dramatic feel and constantly think about guiding the viewer to your focal point by letting the lines point towards it.



03 | PAINT IN VALUES Choose a large brush and begin sketching in the values. If you haven't done this before, try looking at your reference in black-and-white and work from that initially. On a bright day the foreground will generally be darker, the focal point will have the highest contrast and the background will be lighter.

ADOBE LINE

CREATE LINE ART BUILDINGS TO SIT IN YOUR LANDSCAPE USING ADOBE LINE, THEN EXPORT THEM TO THE OTHER ADOBE SUITE APPS



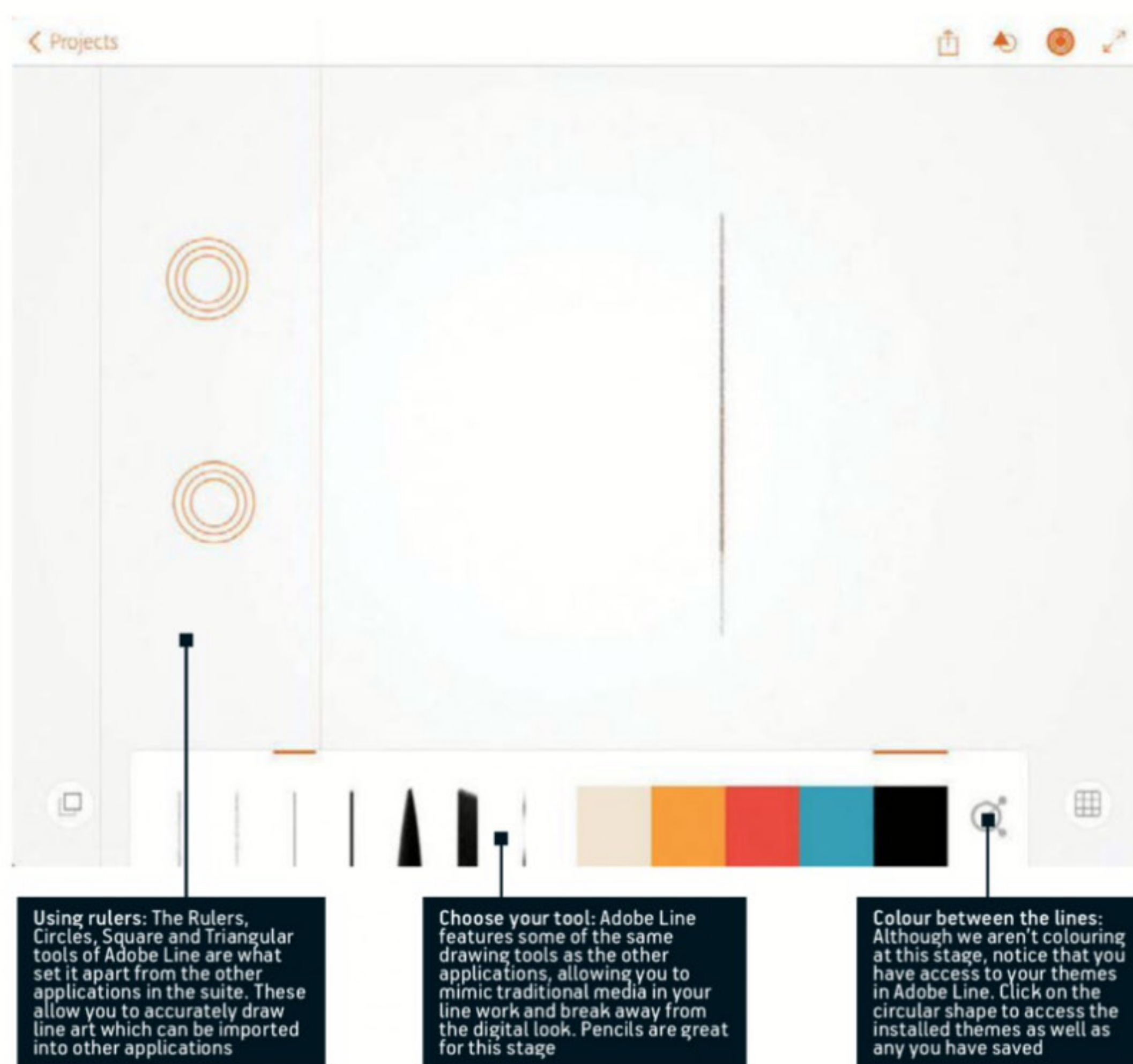
If you need to create detailed drawings featuring sharp angles or sweeping curves, Adobe Line is the app to use. This application uses a variety of implements including rulers, expandable circles and squares to help you draw clean line art and thus is perfect for creating buildings, roads, cities or anything technical. If you have ever done technical drawing you'll feel comfortable here.

For this painting the city will remain fairly abstract and instead focus on a few interesting shapes which hint at the buildings within, but you can really go to town on the detail here if you prefer. Bear in mind that the further away from the camera you place your building or city the less detail you will be able to show overall, so adjust your sketch appropriately. Begin by using the Default Ruler to draw a couple of lines and get a feel for the program. It operates quite differently to the other apps in the suite so may require a little practice to adjust to the workflow. You will need to use both fingers to manipulate the ruler, allowing you to rotate and resize it, then draw a line down the edge using one of the Pen tools available at the bottom of the screen. Notice that Line features snapping – once you have made a mark the ruler will automatically attempt to line your next mark up with its edges, making it easy to lock your shapes together.

Depending on how detailed your sketch was you may find that you need to re-sketch the city area before moving to Line in order to figure out how the shapes work. Reference may once again prove useful here, especially if you plan to add more detail and perspective to your line art. From here on it's simply a case of following your sketches and using the various tools to draw a detailed version.

Exporting your line art is painless – as well as exporting to the Creative Cloud you can also go directly to Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator too if you're a vector wizard. Right now we just want to export to the Creative Cloud once we're finished.

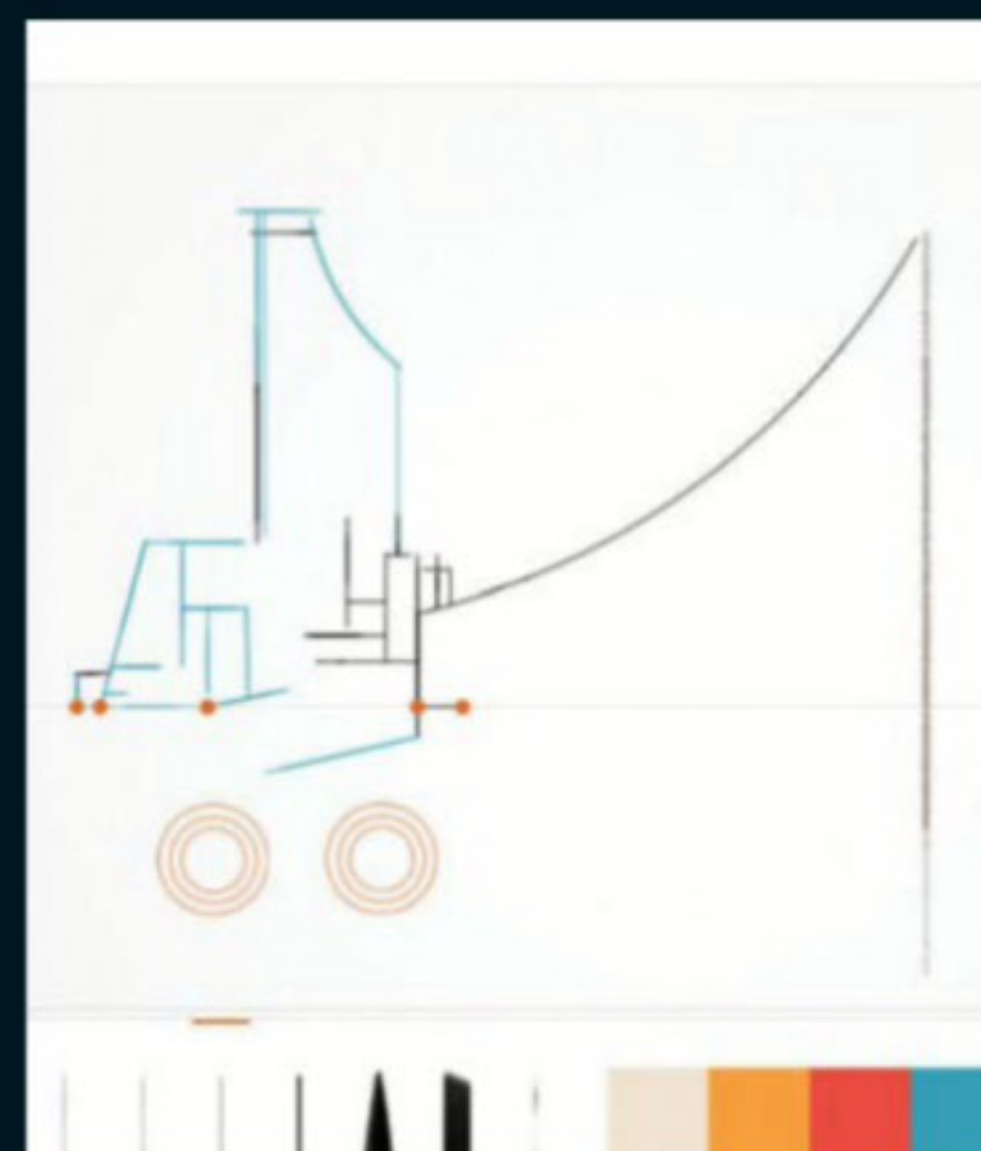
“Bear in mind that the further away from the camera you place your building or city the less detail you will be able to show overall”



WORK UP YOUR LINE DRAWINGS

BOUNCE BETWEEN APPS TO ENSURE YOUR COMPOSITION IS ACCURATE

Because you will be painting over the line art once everything is exported to Photoshop it is not necessary for it to be extremely neat, instead focus on drawing interesting shapes and thinking about how they will look in the environment. Flick between Line and Sketch regularly by double tapping the home button on your device and selecting the desired app to make sure the perspective is working and that it will fit into your landscape. Remember that you can always make changes later to help them flow together, we're still in the exploratory preparation phase of the painting after all. Erasing lines isn't quite as intuitive as creating them, the eraser tends to leave messy edges – if you make a mistake swipe left with two fingers to undo your last line.



ADOBE SHAPE

CREATE CUSTOM VECTOR SHAPES FROM PHOTOGRAPHS, DRAWINGS OR OBJECTS USING ADOBE SHAPE, THEN USE THEM IN PHOTOSHOP TO ADD DETAILS TO YOUR PAINTING



► Custom shapes are one of the most powerful and under-used tools available in Adobe Photoshop. As vector images, they can be stretched, resized and distorted with no loss of image quality, and as such are fantastic for adding small details or creating huge abstract forms. Traditionally these would be created directly in Photoshop through a fairly complicated process involving photographs and masks, but thanks to Adobe Shape it's easy to replicate this process on your iPhone.

To begin, open Adobe Shape and you'll immediately be presented with the camera interface with a large slider and a button in the bottom right. If you are planning to take a photo with the app you should first use the button to select whether the object you are shooting is dark on a light background or light on a dark background. Adjust the slider so that your chosen object is highlighted in green – anything green will be incorporated into the shape. Spend some time adjusting this, you may find that you have to shoot under different light.

Here we are going to sample a bird image for our painting. Birds are an easy way to start as they are often used to give scale to a concept environment, but because they are a little difficult to photograph we are going to find a good royalty free photograph online and save it to the Camera Roll. As with Adobe Brush, try to find an image with decent contrast – you want to make it easy for the application to separate the object from the background. To import your photograph press the cross button in the bottom left hand corner to take you out of camera mode then the plus to add a new shape from the Camera Roll. Once you have chosen your photo you can adjust the green selection as before. Press the Take Photo button to process your new shape and give it a name. It will be added to your Cloud Library automatically, accessible within Photoshop alongside your Brushes and Color Themes.

Try experimenting with your new shapes in Photoshop and don't be afraid to think outside the



“Birds are an easy way to start as they are often used to give scale to a concept environment”

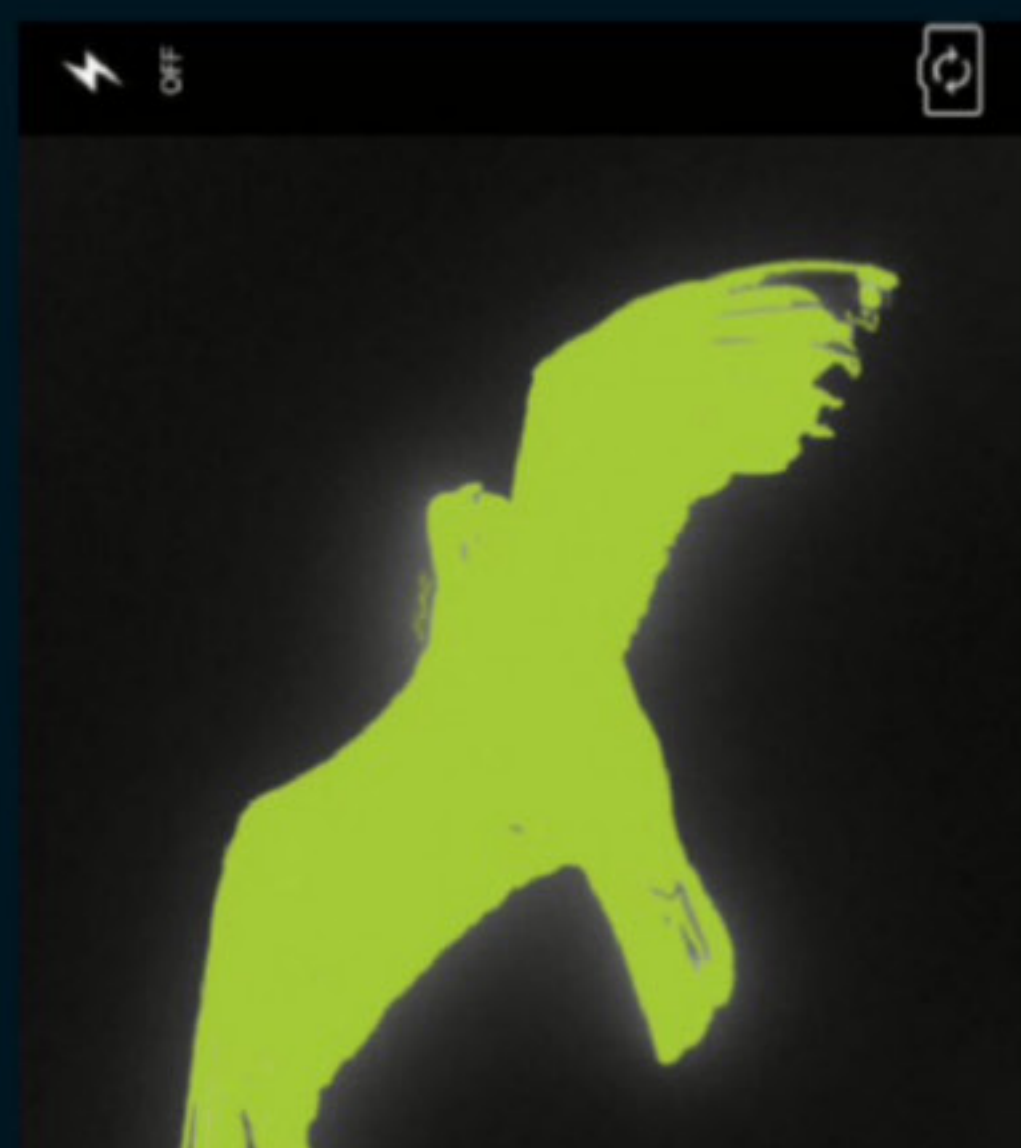
box – a seagull brush can be stretched to create landscape shapes or mountain textures, for example. Create a small library of interesting shapes for this purpose, taking images of trees, mountains, vehicles and skies and use them as vector brushes.

CAPTURE SHAPES TO USE IN PHOTOSHOP

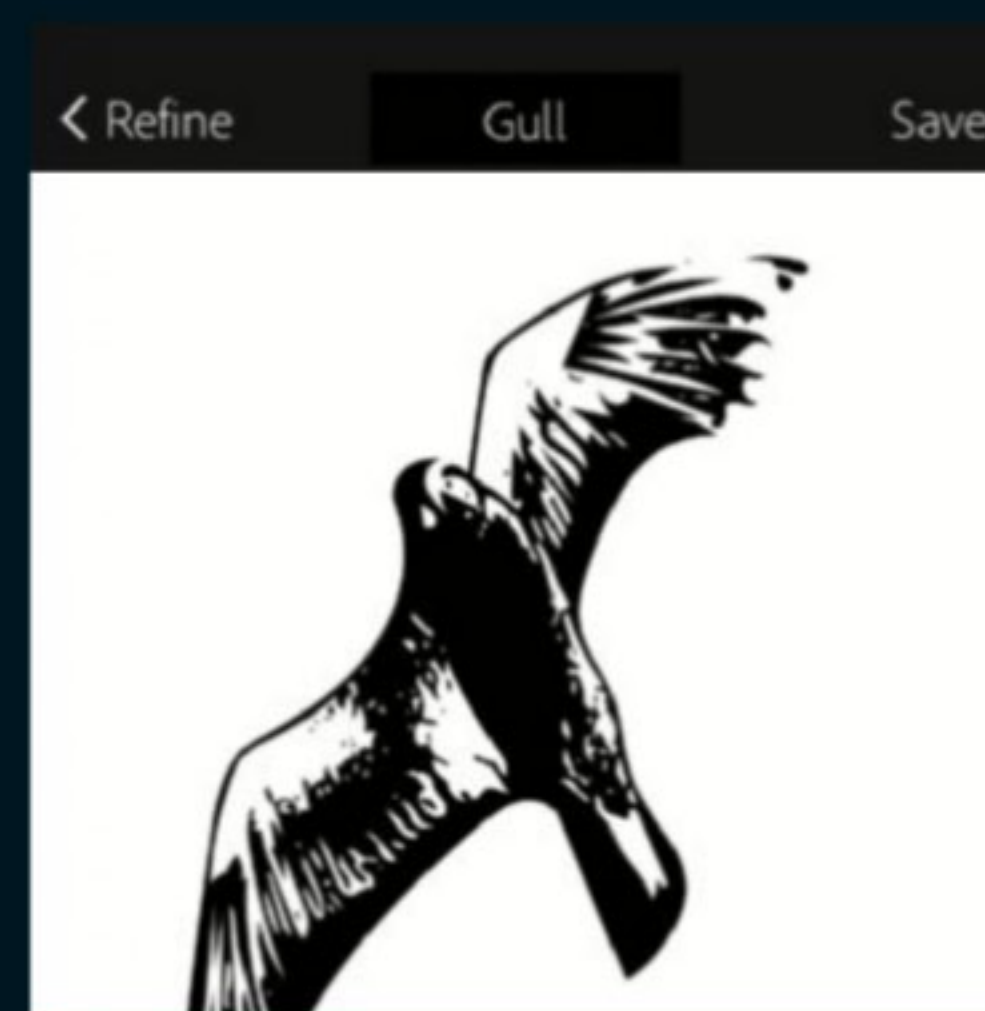
TURN A SEAGULL INTO A USEFUL CUSTOM SHAPE FOR USE IN YOUR DIGITAL PAINTINGS WITH ADOBE SHAPE



01 | FIND A SUITABLE BIRD
Find a royalty free photograph of a seagull or similar bird online. Wiki Commons are particularly good for free stock images as they offer nice images at high resolutions. Save the photo to your Camera Roll.



02 | REFINE YOUR SELECTION
Choose Shape On Light Background to highlight the bird then play with the slider to refine the selection. You want to retain as much detail as possible without including any of the background. Press the Shutter button when you are finished.



03 | SAVE YOUR NEW BIRD SHAPE
Once the application has finished drawing the shape you can name it ready to import into Photoshop through the CC library. Experiment with different shapes and see how they work in Photoshop – remember you have total control over these vectors so try using them like brushes and see what happens.

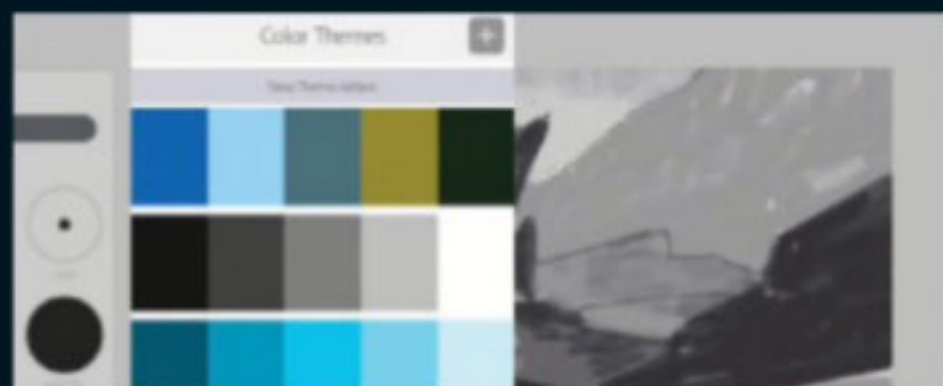
ADOBE DRAW

REFINE THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF YOUR SKETCH USING ADOBE DRAW WITH THE TOOLS YOU CREATED EARLIER AND CREATE A COLOUR MOCK-UP



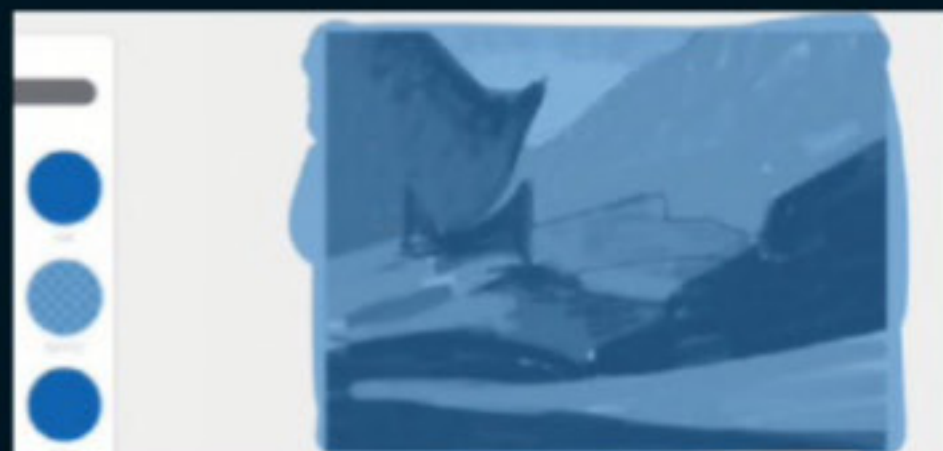
CREATE A COLOUR MOCK-UP

USE THE BRUSHES AND COLOUR THEME YOU CREATED EARLIER TO ADD SOME COLOURS TO YOUR SKETCH



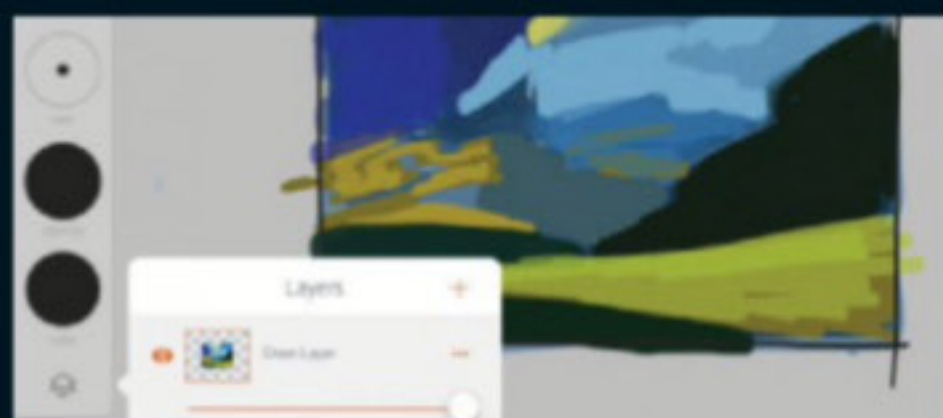
01 | SELECT YOUR COLOURS

Open the Color Theme browser to view the palettes available in Adobe Draw. Any themes you have created with Adobe Color will appear here – simply tap a colour to select it. If you wish to edit the colour, changing hue or saturation, tap the colour wheel icon at the top.



02 | START PAINTING IN COLOUR

Start by applying light washes of colour over your image. It's best to start with the sky tone then begin working into each area of the painting. Use your reference image to help with your colour choices.



03 | FILL THE CANVAS

Continue working in each area of the image until it resembles a basic version of the final. Don't worry about detail, we can deal with that in the real painting, the goal is to fill the canvas with colours which can then be refined in Photoshop.



“The reason we are working at lower opacity is to allow the sketch to show through, build up the colour through various washes rather than applying heavy blobs”

Adobe Draw is probably the most fully featured app in the Adobe suite, offering a comprehensive drawing and painting package for your iPad or iPhone. It allows importing of images and supports multiple layers meaning you can trace photos or paint over them, and because of this it's ideal for adding some colour to our sketch in order to further prepare for the real painting. Like the value sketch we created earlier, a colour mock-up is going to help remove the stress of colour choice during the painting phase allowing us to enjoy the process of rendering. Draw integrates everything we have already created so far, bringing together the brushes, shapes and colour themes, and thanks to the layer support you can even import your line work from Adobe Line.

To get started, let's import the sketch created in the Adobe Sketch app. Press the Layer button on the left hand side of the screen just under the colour circle. This will pop up the Layer tab allowing you to add new layers, change their opacity and move them around. Tap the Photo Layer and either select On my iPhone to choose an image in your Camera Roll or My Files to pull the sketch directly from Creative Cloud. Next, create a new layer above your sketch on

which to apply colour. Press the Color button to bring up the installed themes and select the theme you created earlier – we will use this palette to create our colour mock-up. Once again we don't have to be neat during this stage, this is just another guideline for the actual painting. Grab a big brush and lower the Opacity to around 20% then start gently working in those colours. The reason we are working at lower opacity is to allow the sketch to show through, building up the colour through various washes rather than applying heavy blobs. Use your reference to guide you when applying colour, paying close attention to how the shadows differ from the lighter areas and thinking about where to exaggerate tones and where to hold back. The same rules apply here as to the value study we created earlier – distant objects will appear lighter and more blue due to atmospheric perspective while the foreground tends to be darker and more saturated. The end goal for this stage is to use every colour in the theme we created and to have an image that, if you squint at it, will roughly resemble the final painting's tones. When you are finished export this image to the Cloud as before.

BRING IT TOGETHER

TAKE YOUR NEW TOOLS, SKETCHES AND STUDIES INTO PHOTOSHOP AND USE THEM TO CREATE POLISHED, FINAL ARTWORK

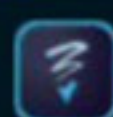
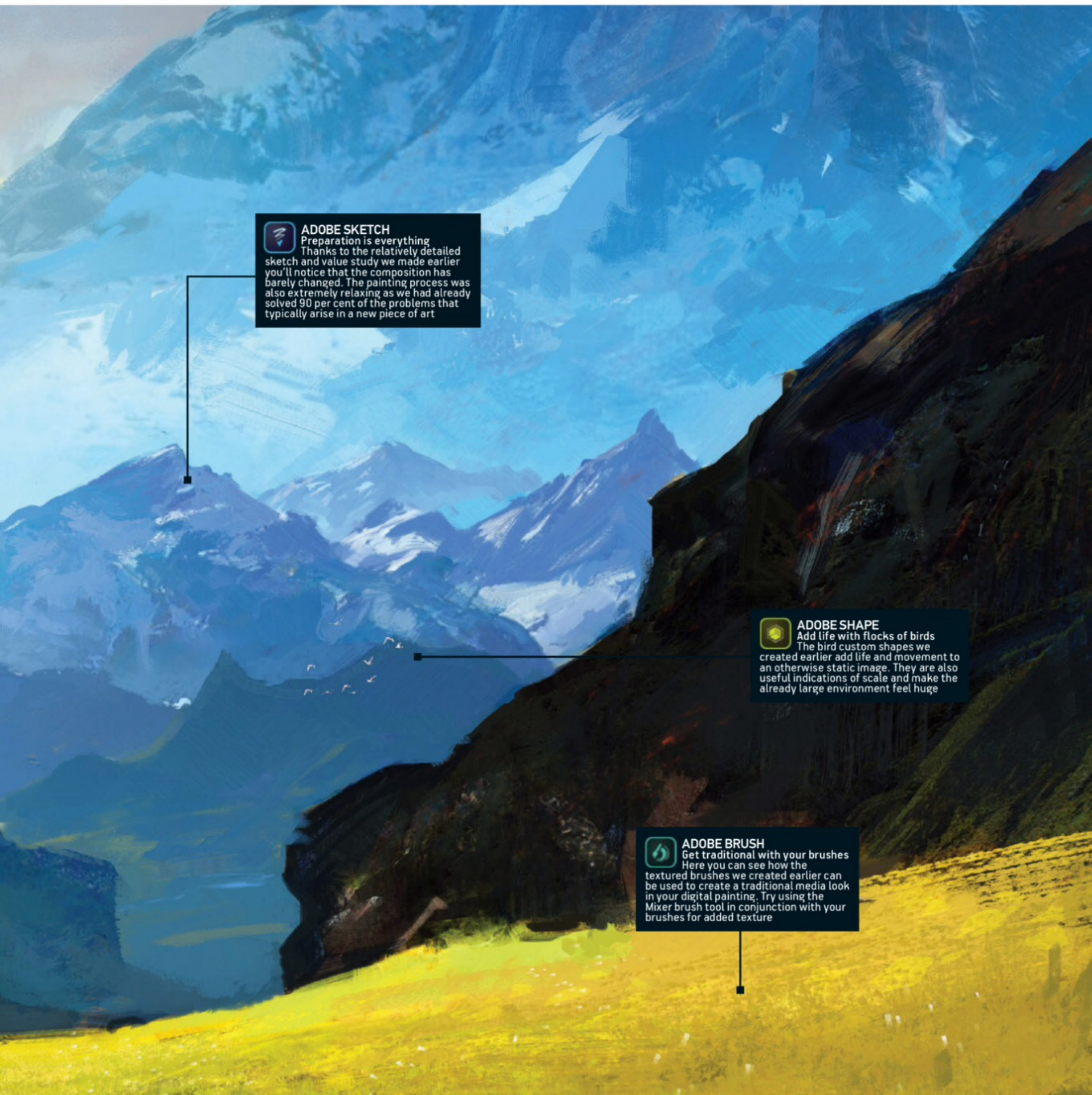


ADOBE LINE
Solve problems with lines
Simplify the shapes of the city so that they don't draw too much attention from the landscape. Working out those shapes using the detailed line tools available in Adobe Line can be extremely useful in the early stages

ADOBE DRAW
Plan your painting
If you squint your eyes you'll see that the colours used in the final image aren't too far away from what we produced in the colour mock-up. Being able to create sketches like this anywhere is one of the biggest advantages of the Adobe suite

ADOBE COLOR
Strong palettes read well
You can clearly see how effective using a photo palette is in this painting – despite the landscape being heavily stylised it still retains a relatively realistic feel thanks to the natural colour choices

IN PHOTOSHOP



ADOBE SKETCH

Preparation is everything. Thanks to the relatively detailed sketch and value study we made earlier, you'll notice that the composition has barely changed. The painting process was also extremely relaxing as we had already solved 90 per cent of the problems that typically arise in a new piece of art.



ADOBE SHAPE

Add life with flocks of birds. The bird custom shapes we created earlier add life and movement to an otherwise static image. They are also useful indications of scale and make the already large environment feel huge.



ADOBE BRUSH

Get traditional with your brushes. Here you can see how the textured brushes we created earlier can be used to create a traditional media look in your digital painting. Try using the Mixer brush tool in conjunction with your brushes for added texture.



MASTER RENDER FLAME

LEARN HOW TO USE THIS NEW FILTER TOOL WITH YOUR OWN FIRE AND FLAME ELEMENTS ALONG THE PATHS YOU CREATE

What if Photoshop had the potential to deliver composite elements at the touch of a button? What if you didn't have to spend extra time shooting elements like fire and sparks, or scouring the Internet for stock images?

Not only has Photoshop given us the ability to render our own trees in past editions, but now in Photoshop CC 2014 we are able to use the new Render Flame filter to create our own fire elements

from scratch. In this tutorial we will show you how easy it is to create your own flames, sparks, and other fire elements straight from your imagination. To get the most from this tutorial, an average to advanced understanding of layers, blending modes, and the Pen tool will definitely prove to be beneficial. Discover how to take it one step further by not only using the Render Flame technique, but also combining the render technique with real fire element photographs.

■ SKETCH, PLAN AND PROCESS

BE SURE TO CONSIDER LIGHTING WHEN SHOOTING YOUR IMAGES

01 BEGIN WITH A SKETCH

When trying to pull off any composite, proper planning is essential but even more so when a client has a specific idea in mind. Having a sketch will allow you to explain your vision to your talent or client, or in this case allow the client to explain their vision.



02 LIGHT THE PHOTOSHOOT

Whenever you plan to have a lighting source, such as fire, close to your subject's body in your final image, it's very beneficial to create a stand-in light during the actual photoshoot itself. By placing CTO gel inside of a globe modifier you are not only able to get the global light you need, but also the orange colour cast as well.



03 PROCESS YOUR SUBJECT BEFORE MASKING

It's always good to process your model image before you do your masking. There are many different methods or presets that aid in processing but they sometimes leave the edges of your subjects with haloing or hard lines. To avoid having lines or haloing in your final image, process first. This way you can make sure your masks are tight enough that any haloing or hard lines get eliminated.



OUR EXPERT

BRANDON CAWOOD
www.brandoncawood.com
@brandon_cawood

Brandon Cawood is a commercial and advertising photographer from Georgia, USA. He specialises in high-energy composites and does his own retouching and Photoshop work.

↓ SOURCE FILES

Check out FileSilo for an alternative background, fire, clouds, and spark images for personal use images. Use them to assist and enhance your own Render Flame images.

■ WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM CONCEPTION TO CREATION



Progress 1: Concept and sketch



Progress 2: Capturing effects in camera

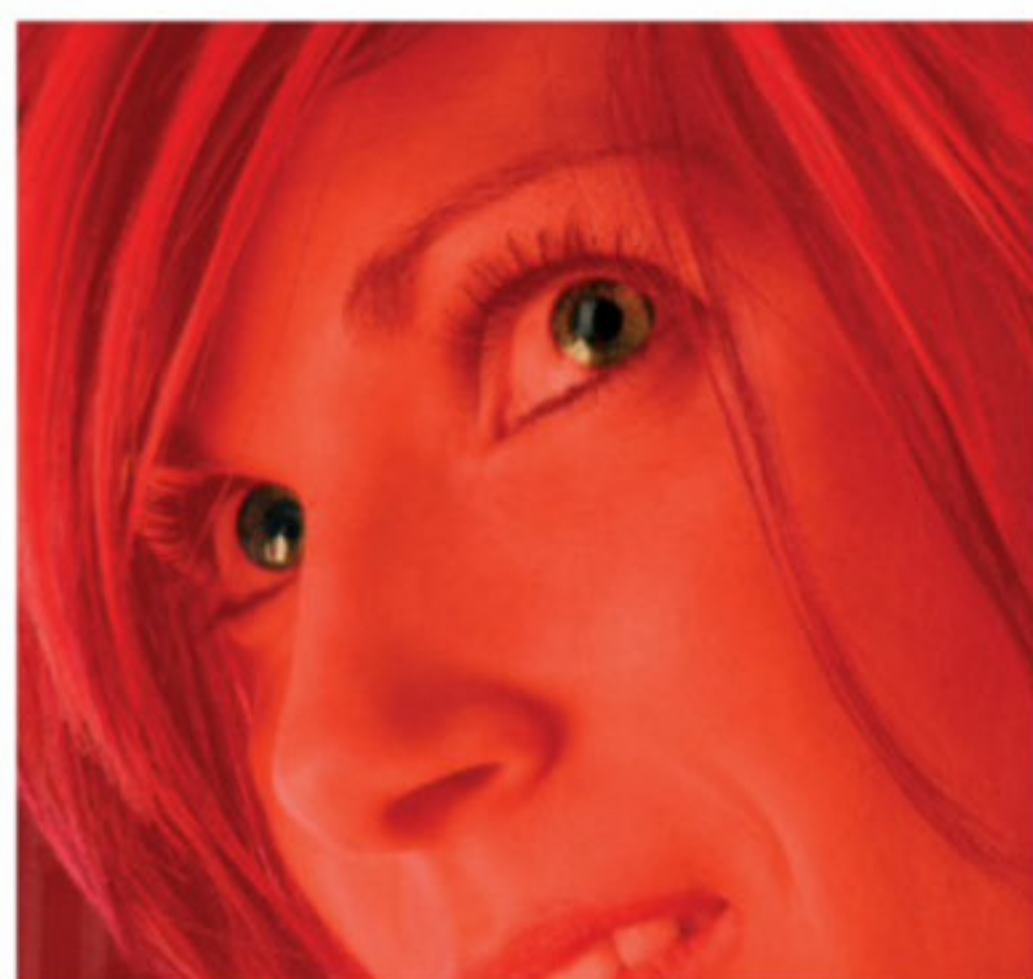


Progress 3: Mastering Render Flame



04 | MASK THE BODY

The key to any great composite is having very clean masks. Focus on the body and clothing first. Always add a layer mask so you can use black to remove and white to add back. A pen tablet comes in handy. Take your time. Zoom in to 500% and with a black Hard brush, set at 8 pixels, follow the outline of what you want to extract. If you make a mistake, just switch your brush to white and paint it back. To make sure you are masking out everything that needs to be transparent, press the \ key and your mask will turn red. Press it again to turn it off.



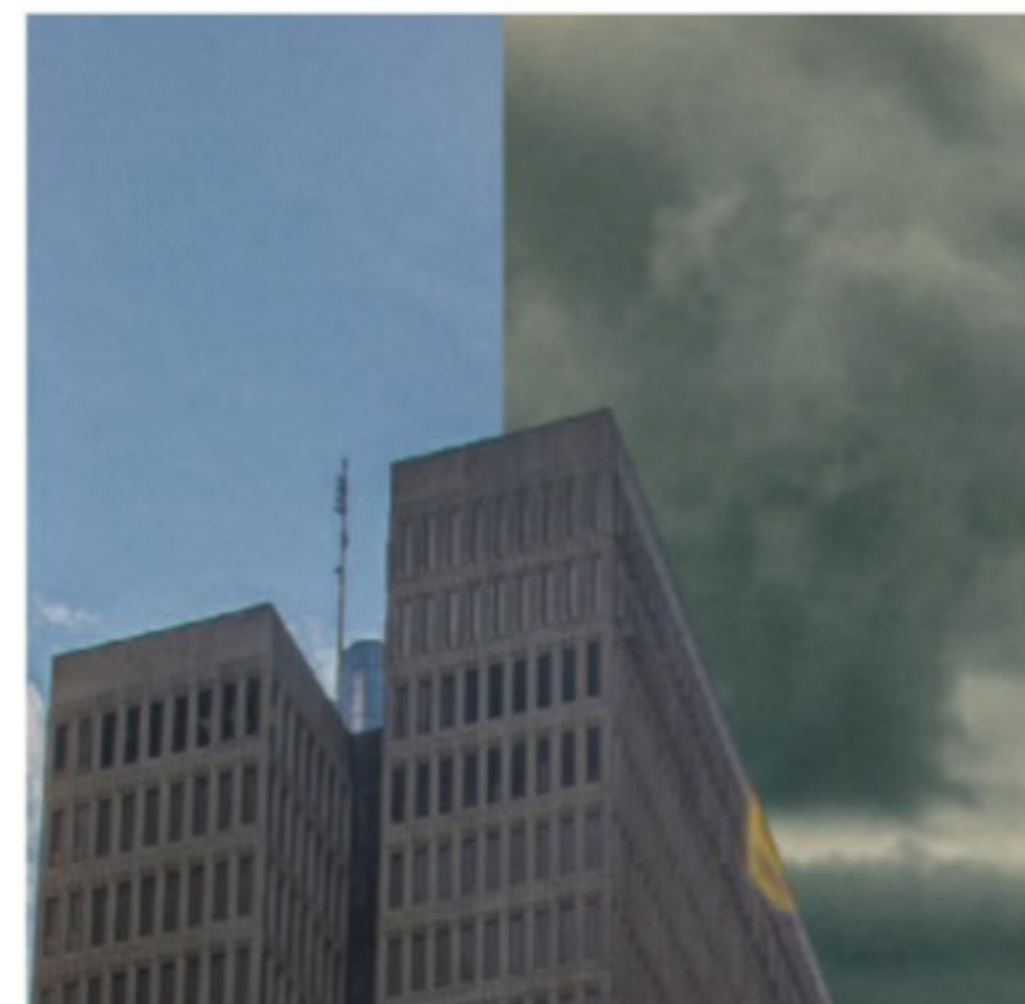
07 | MAKE THE EYES POP

Making the eyes of your subject pop can really add emotion into the image. The key is to keep it subtle but effective. Create a Curves adjustment layer on top of all the other layers. When you do this it will have its own mask already filled with white. You want to fill the mask with black and grab a white brush. Paint in the mask only over the pupils and iris. Now you want to make an S shape on your Curves layers. On your graph add a point about a quarter of the way up, one in the middle, and one about three-quarters of the way up. Leave the one in the middle and bring the top one up slightly and the bottom one down. You can now adjust the opacity of this layer if the effect is over the top.



05 | MASK THE HAIR

When you have contrast between the hair and background, extracting the hair is much easier. Duplicate your subject and add a Hue adjustment layer and a Levels adjustment layer. Bring the Saturation all the way down on the Hue layer. With the Levels layer move the left and right sliders towards the middle. The idea is to make the background as white as possible and the hair as dark as possible without distorting it. Use the Quick Selection tool to select the face and all the hair. Then you want to use Refine Edge to refine and apply your mask.

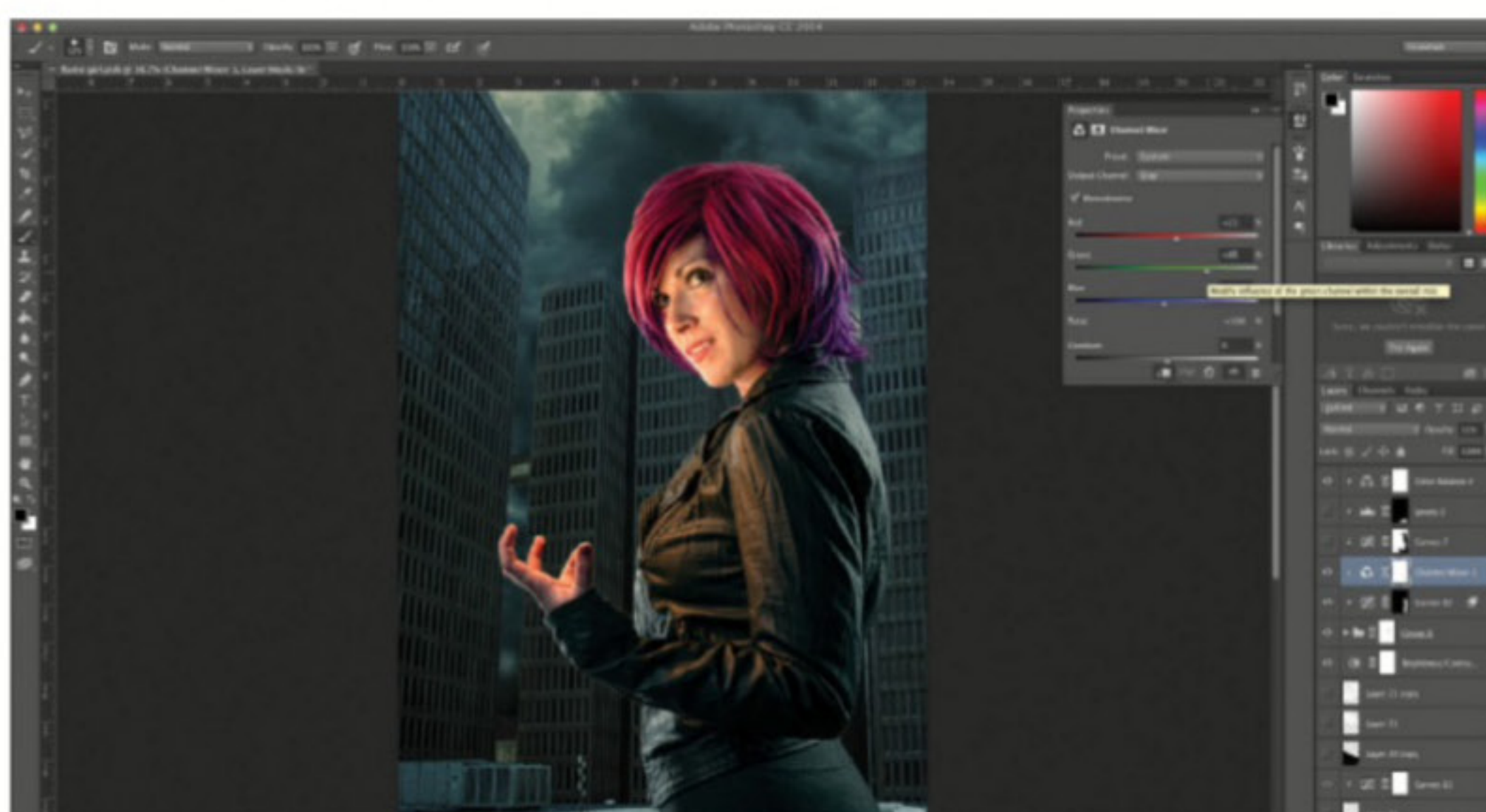


06 | PREPARE THE BACKGROUND

The main problem with the background image is it was taken during the day instead of in darkness. This is a simple fix. First you want to follow the same procedures from Steps 3 and 4 and extract the buildings by masking the sky. After that you want to drop an image of some dark storm clouds behind the city image. Use a Curves adjustment clipped to the background or the clouds to get the exposures about the same. Group the two images and clip a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to the group and bring the Saturation down to about 50%. Colours aren't as vibrant when it's dark and cloudy.

■ QUICK TIP

It's not uncommon to come to a crossroads when creating an image. Sometimes you see two very different end results in your mind. Try them both! Save your PSD under two different names and try out both ideas. Compare them and decide what one you like better. You may even decide to use them both for different things.



08 | COLOUR MATCH THE SUBJECT AND BACKGROUND

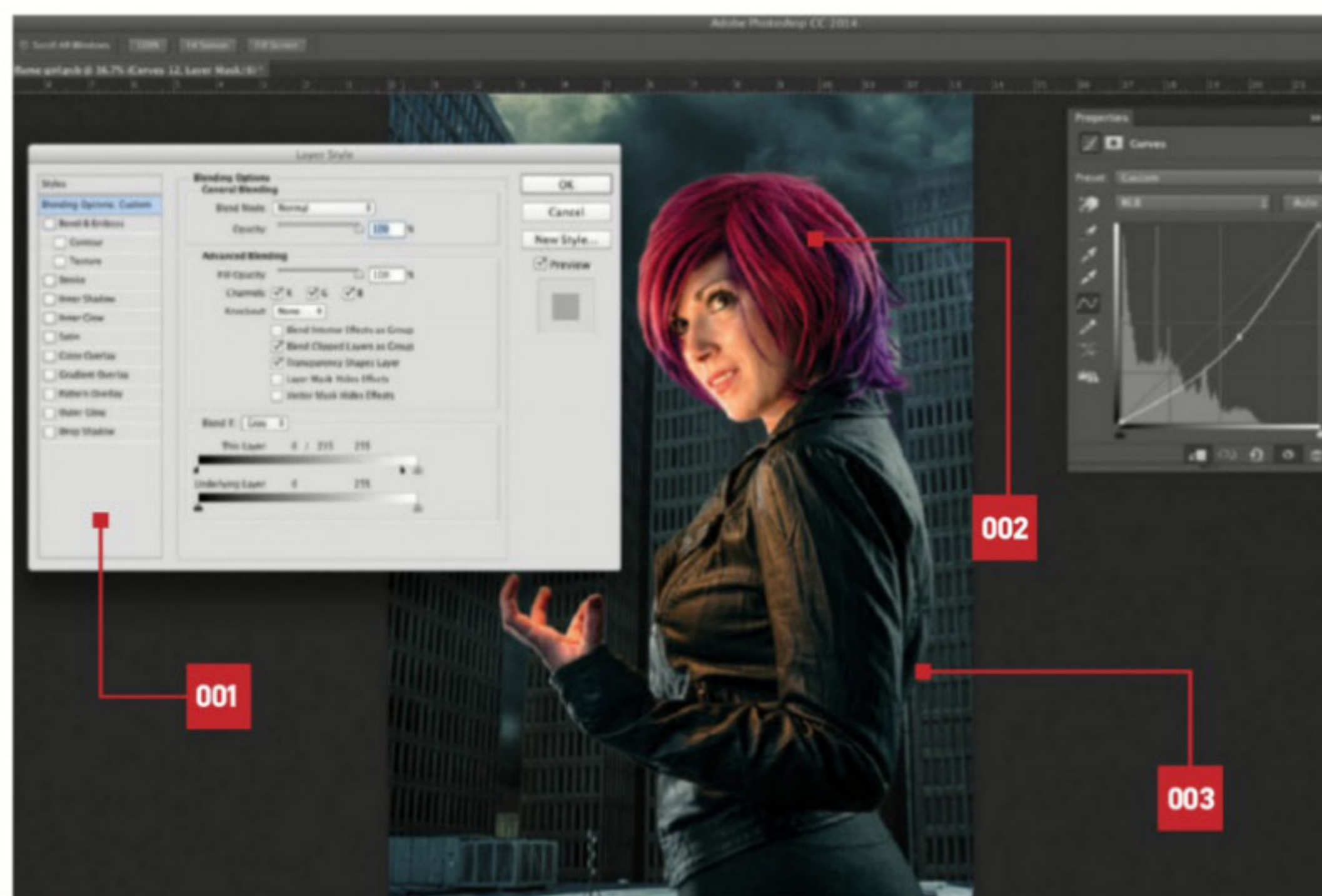
Use an individual Curves adjustment layer on top of the background layer. Make sure it is clipped to only the background layer by selecting Layer>Create Clipping Mask. Use the RGB channel to adjust the exposure so that it matches the model. Next use Channels to match the temperature of the model. You may want to repeat this process on the model. You will end up blending the two images even more when you get to colour grading.

■ USE THE RENDER FLAME FILTER

COMBINE THE RENDER FLAME FILTER WITH A REAL FIRE IMAGE AND SPARKS

09 | ADJUST SHADOWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

If you feel that your highlights are too bright or not bright enough you can adjust them without affecting your shadows. Add a new Curves adjustment layer above all other layers. Adjust the RGB channel accordingly. This is just like Step 8 but we are using the RGB channel instead of the blue channel. With your Curves adjustment layer selected go to Layer>Layer Style>Blending Options. At the bottom of the window you will see two sliders under Underlying Layer. Hold down Alt/Option then click and drag the right corner of the black slider all the way to the right. This will cause the Curves to only affect the highlights in the image. Do the opposite for shadow adjustments.



001 | BE PREPARED

Having a vision is crucial in executing a well-balanced image. Having a plan will keep you organised and on track to creating something special

002 | MATCHING COLOUR IS KEY

Making sure the colour temperature and exposure match between your subject and background is crucial to creating a believable image

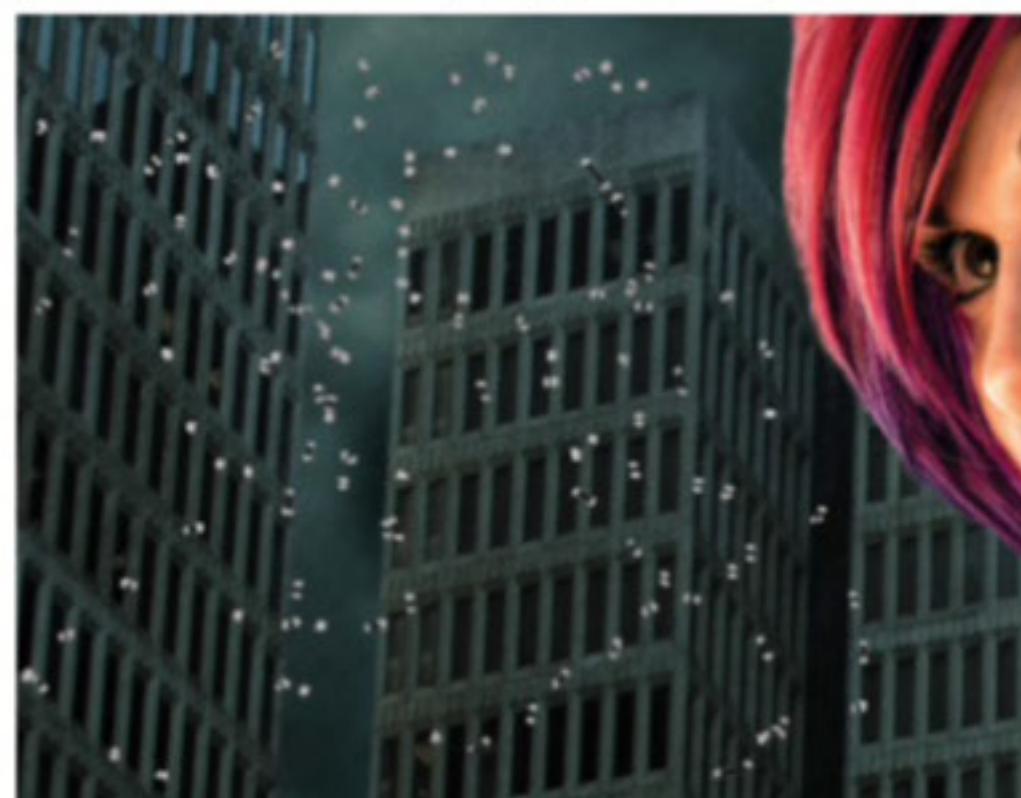
003 | ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Pay attention to even the smallest of details. Even if no-one else notices, you will sleep better knowing you put everything you had into your work!



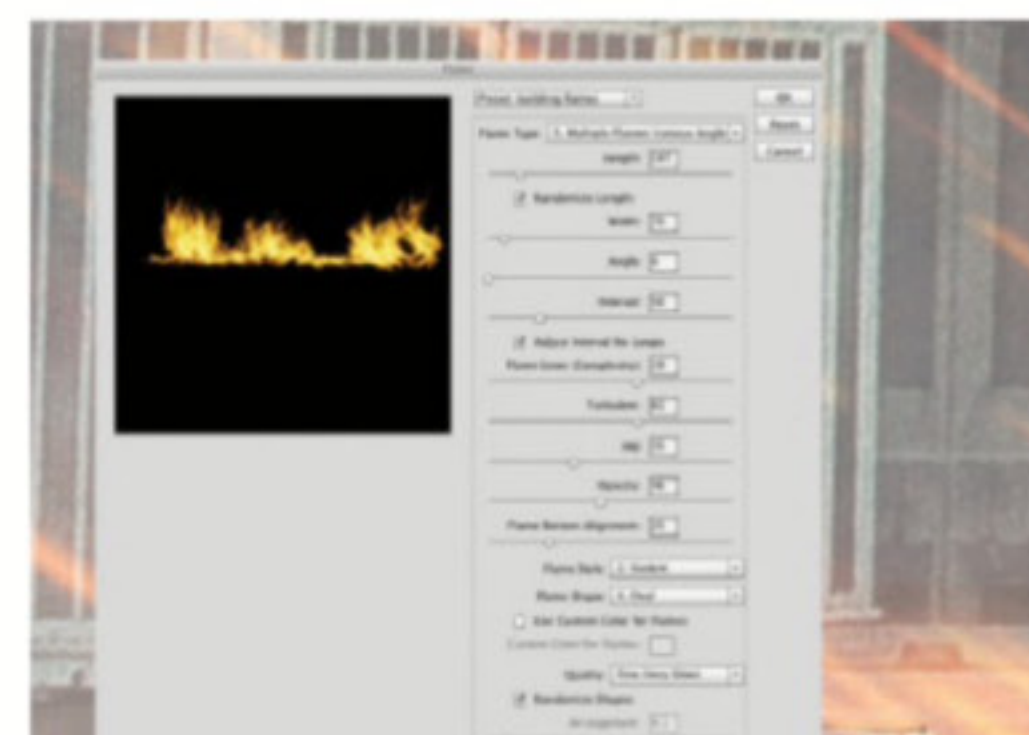
11 | RENDER FLAME ON THE HAND

For this image you want flames to look like they are riding up the fingers of the subject. This is where Render Flame can be more effective and beneficial than using real photos of fire. You are going to want to focus on one finger at a time. Follow the same procedure as Step 10 but make sure to put each flame on its own layer so you can Transform and Warp it if you need to. Since we are going to use a photo of fire for the main fireball, make sure that your finger flames go past the fingertips and flare out so they blend with the real fire elements.



12 | CREATE SPARKS

To create sparks you will reverse the process a little. Create a new layer and grab a Hard Round brush set at 8 pixels. Start drawing very small dots and dashes about the size of sparks. Use the Magic Wand tool to select the negative space of the layer then inverse the selection. Next go to your Paths panel then click the Make Work Path from Selection icon. Follow the procedure from Step 10 and make sure to change your blending mode to Screen. Add a Motion Blur to give the sparks some motion.



10 | USE RENDER FLAME ON THE BACKGROUND

The Render Flame filter is a great way to create custom flames quickly and effectively and it's relatively easy! For this composite we want to put some flames on the buildings in the background. Create a new blank layer above your background. Grab the Pen tool and create a path where you would like the fire to go. Next go to Filter>Render>Flame. A dialog box will open up. You can adjust the type of flame you want, the direction, the width, and much more. Choose the quality you want the flame to be rendered at. Once you get your flames the way you want them, click OK. Deselect your path and you will have a custom flame on its own layer. Turn the blending mode to Screen.

“The Render Flame filter is a great way to create custom flames quickly and effectively and it's relatively easy!”

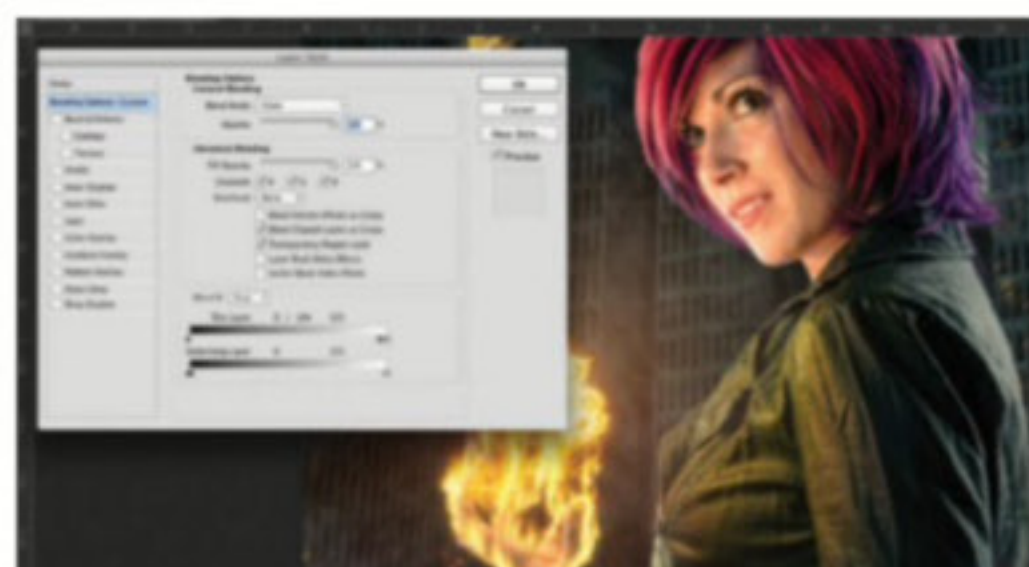


13 | ADD REAL FIRE ELEMENTS AND SMOKE

Although you are using Render Flame to create custom fire elements, it's hard to beat the real thing. For the main fireball use a real photo of fire on a black background. Put the fire on top of the layer you want it to be over and turn the blending mode to Screen. On your keyboard hold down Cmd/Ctrl+T. This will allow you to transform and size your flame. Follow the same steps to add fog and smoke. A great smoke and fog package can be bought at www.phlearn.com. Use a Levels adjustment layer to adjust the amount of fog or smoke.

► ENHANCE IT AND ADD THE FINISHING TOUCHES

MAKE YOUR IMAGE MORE REALISTIC WITH SOME FINAL TWEAKS

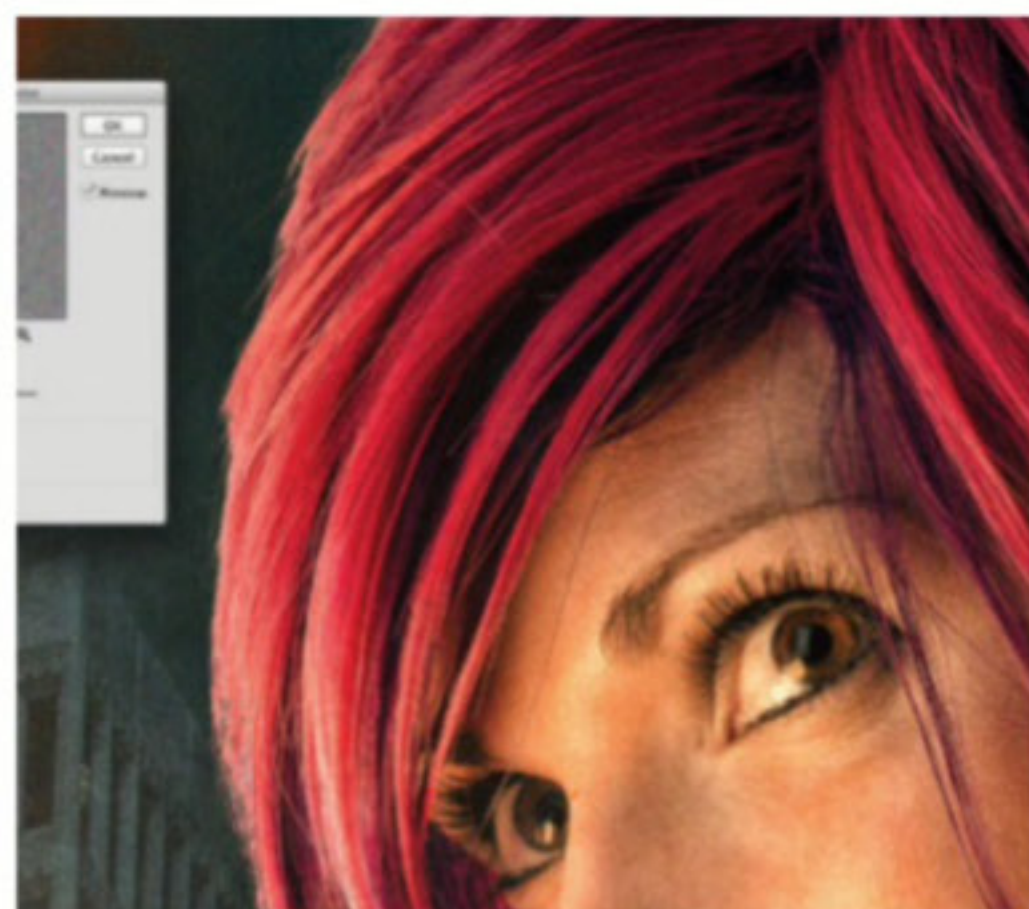


14 | ENHANCE THE FLAME'S GLOW ON THE BODY

Add a blank layer above your subject. Grab a Soft brush, change the Opacity to around 20% and make it orange. Take your brush and paint over your subject where the light from the fire should be hitting them. Clip the layer to your model layer so it only affects that. Turn your blending mode to Color. Use the procedure from Step 9 to make it only affect the highlights. Add a layer mask and mask out any areas that shouldn't have the glow from the fire.

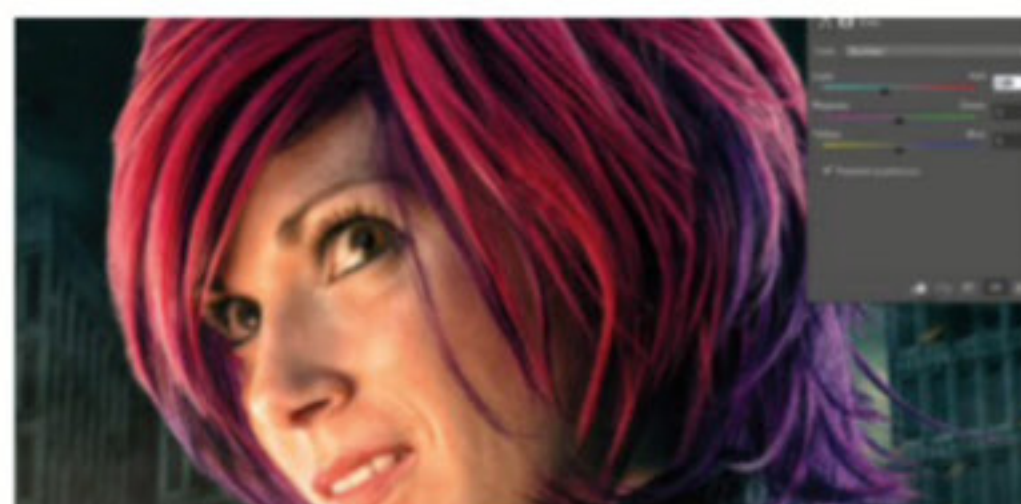
■ QUICK TIP

An easy way to enhance your fire elements even further is to duplicate the layer. After that add a Gaussian Blur with a radius of about 30 to give your fire elements a nice soft glow. Use this on flames as well as sparks.



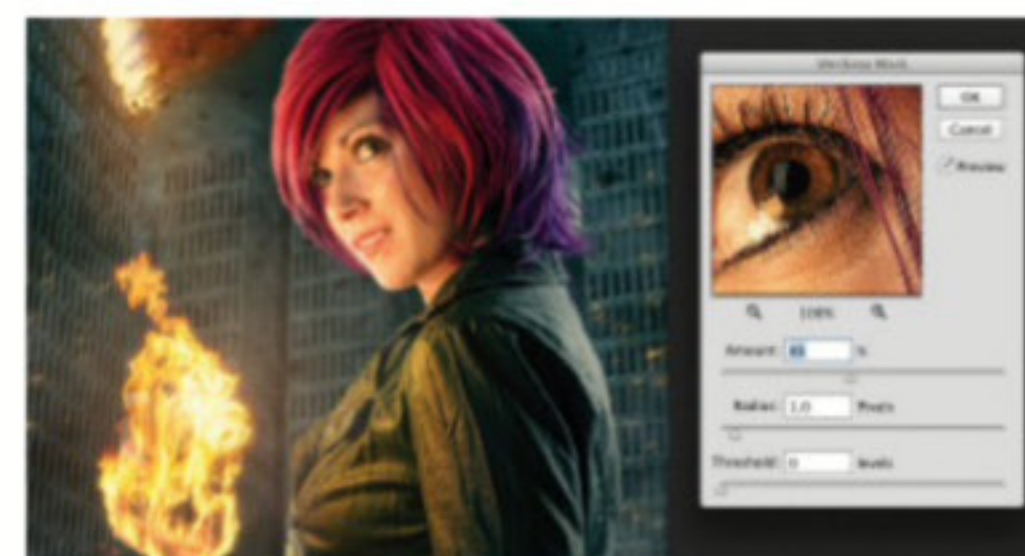
17 | ADD GRAIN

Lastly add grain. Create a new layer above your sharpened image. Hold down Shift and click Delete. Choose Fill with 50% Gray. Change the blending mode of this layer to Soft Light. Next select Filter>Noise>Add Noise. The size of your image will determine the amount you use. Choose Uniform and leave Monochromatic unselected. Once you apply, hold down Cmd/Ctrl+U. Then pull down the Saturation to -85%. Leaving a little colour in the grain will make it look more natural. Make sure to do this step at full zoom. You can adjust the opacity if it feels like it's too much. Save your PSD with all layers intact.



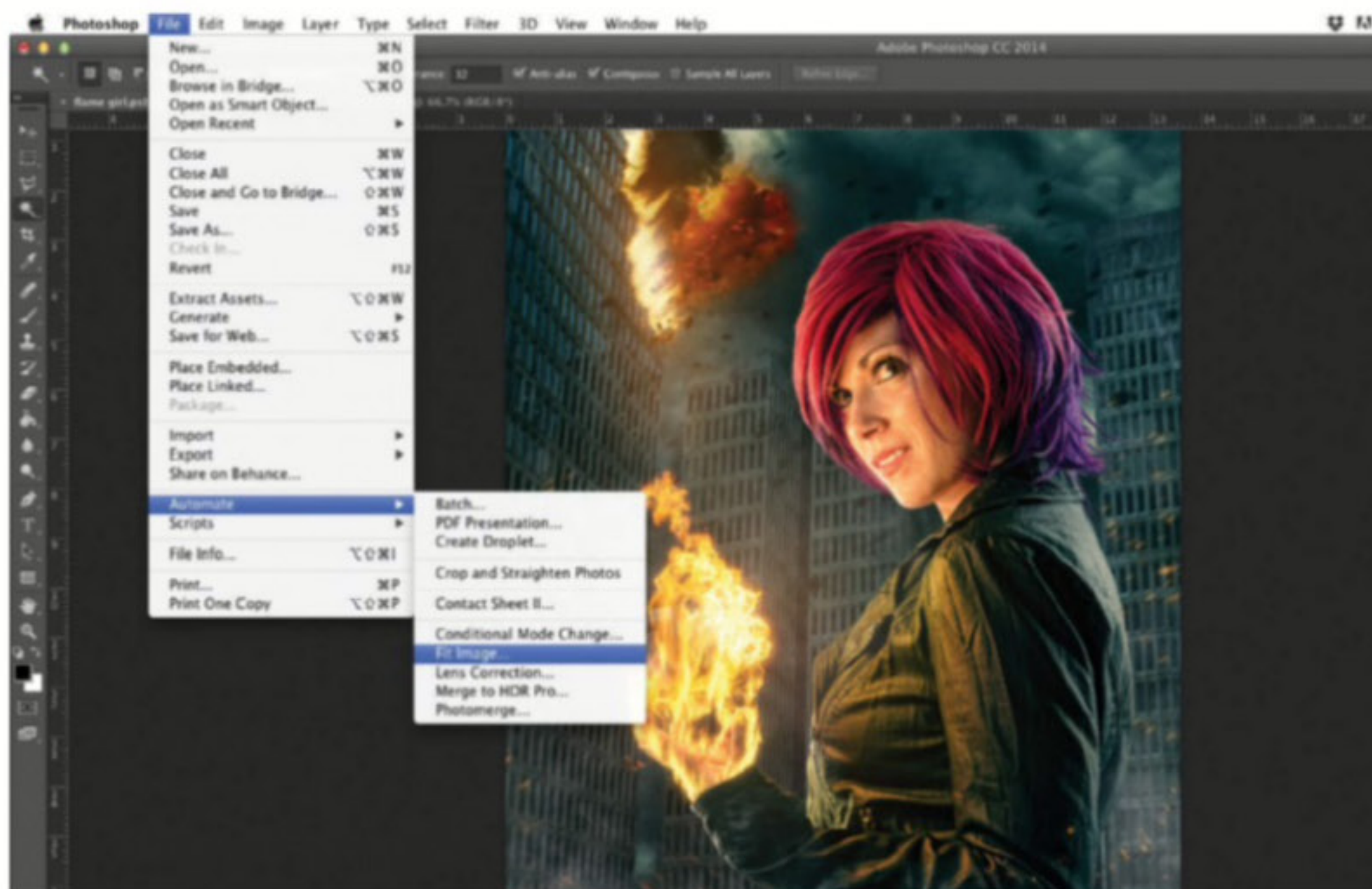
15 | FINAL COLOUR GRADING

First add a Channel Mixer adjustment layer. Choose the Black and White With Green preset. You will notice this turns your image black and white. You want to use this adjustment for some desaturation so bring the Opacity down to 15%. Next add a Color Balance adjustment layer. The Color Balance adjustments will vary from image to image so play around with them to get the look you want. For this image the Shadows and Midtones were pushed towards the cyan and blue tones, while the Highlights were pushed towards the red and yellow tones.



16 | SHARPEN

Save your PSD. Once you have saved it select Layer>Flatten Image. Make a duplicate copy of the flattened image by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+J. Select your top layer. Next select Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask. Adjust the sliders as needed based on file size. While still on the top layer, select Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. You can then use a Soft brush set to black to remove the sharpening from any areas you don't want it. You can also use the opacity to pull down the sharpening over the entire image.



18 | SAVE IT

You can save the image several different ways depending on its use. If you are going to use a good quality printing lab you can leave the image in Adobe RGB and select File>Save As. Save the file as a JPEG or TIFF. If you are planning on using a low-end printer or saving for online use you want to convert to sRGB. Select Edit>Convert to Profile. Choose Working RGB. Save it the same way as before. For online use it's good to scale it down before saving. Select File>Automate>Fit Image. Do a width of 2048 pixels and a height of 2048 pixels. Save it as a JPEG, and put it in a separate folder so you know it's for online use.

■ VISUAL HELP

Sometimes techniques like Render Flame are hard to grasp in written form. A video or visual explanation can sometimes help. Brendon Cawood has created a video tutorial to go along with the Render Flame portion of this tutorial. You can find it by going to his website www.brendoncawood.com and clicking on the video tutorials page. You will find videos that go into further depth explaining how to incorporate the fire elements as well as colour grading.



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SAVE RHINOS NOW

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An animal in crisis

In eastern Africa, poachers use automatic weapons to slaughter endangered rhinos. The animals are shot and the horns are hacked away, tearing deep into the rhinos' flesh with the rhino left to die.



Make a difference today

OI Pejeta is a leading conservancy fighting against this cruelty. It needs more funds so more rangers and surveillance can be deployed on the ground to save rhinos from this horrible treatment.



Join World of Animals

World of Animals magazine takes a stand against these atrocities and is proud to be in partnership with the OI Pejeta Conservancy - 10% of our profits go towards saving rhinos in the fight against poaching



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“ I used stock imagery to bring details in; it saved me a lot of time instead of modelling all of them ”

© Edwin Puzinkevich



KEEP COLD IN YOUR FRIDGE NOT IN YOUR HEART

EDVIN PUZINKEVICH

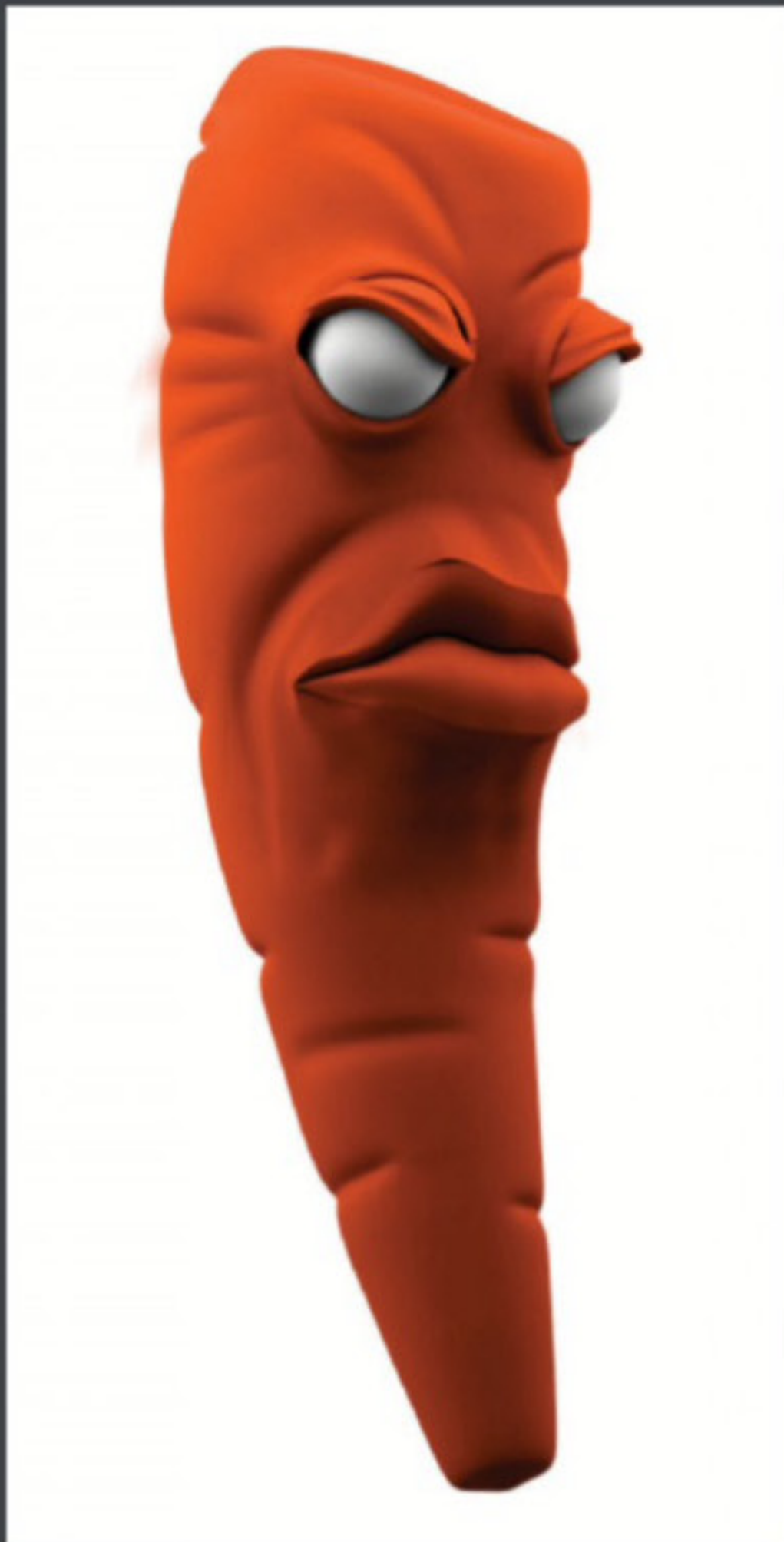
DISCOVER HOW EDVIN PUZINKEVICH COMBINED PHOTOSHOP AND CINEMA 4D TO CREATE THIS ICE-COOL IMAGE

Award-winning digital artist Edvin Puzinkevich (www.behance.net/edvin) has certainly moved around a fair bit during his career and had a variety of jobs. The Latvian-born artist has worked at Unisono in Bahrain as a visualiser and illustrator, at We Are XYZ in San Francisco as a senior creative retoucher, and is currently senior retoucher at Vault49 in New York.

This image was created for a competition called Think.Eat.Save, aimed at highlighting the issue of food waste. "The idea behind the picture is to show that by buying too much food we make it 'prisoners' in our fridges," he explains. "I chose a carrot because the colour of it is reminiscent of prisoners' clothes in the US."

This was one of Puzinkevich's first forays into cartoon-style CGI characters, and he created the

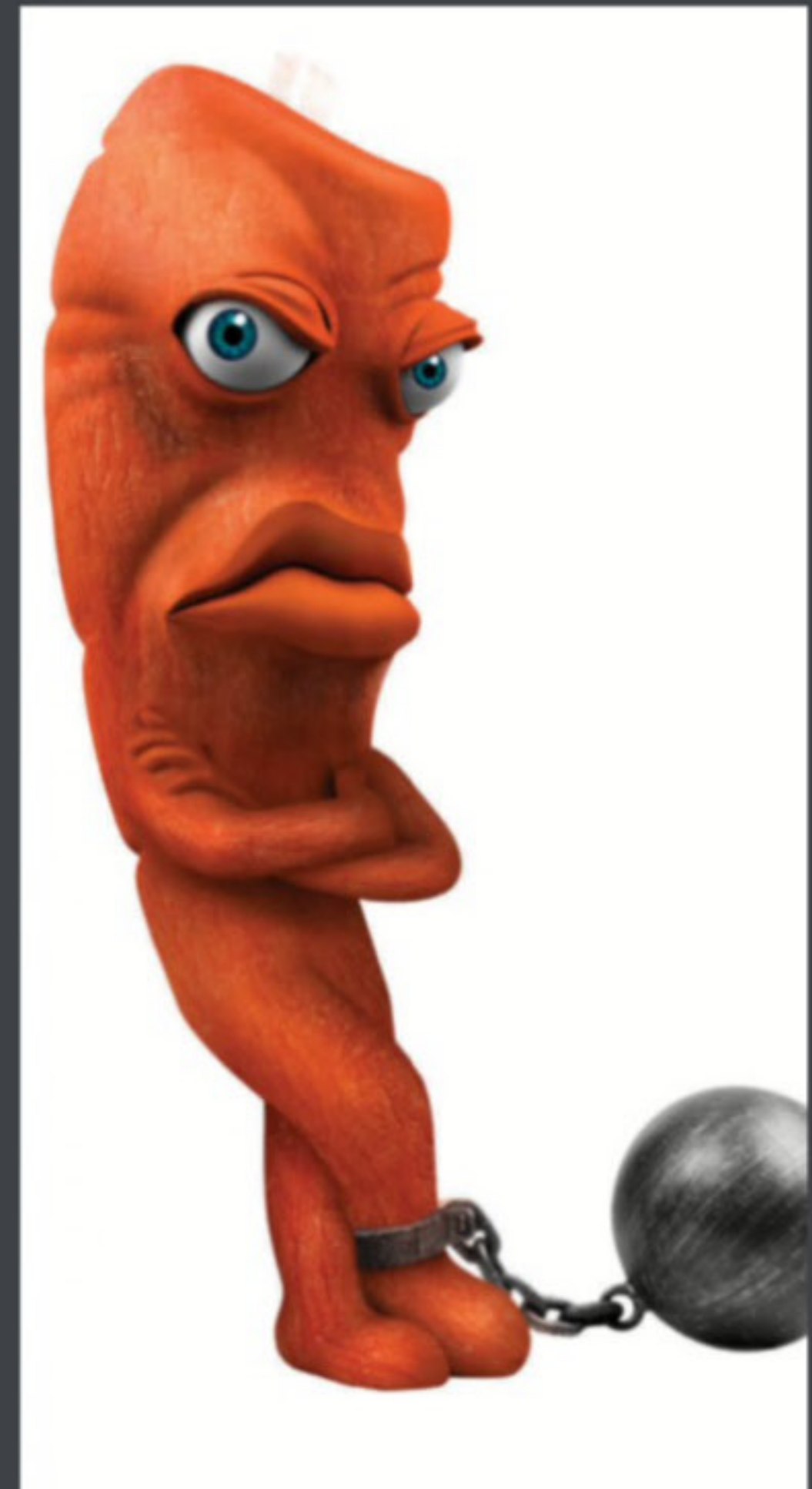
image in a mix of Cinema 4D and Photoshop, relying on stock photography to get the exact expressions he wanted. "To get the right expression of eyes and lips was essential for this picture... I used stock imagery to bring details in; it saved me a lot of time instead of modelling all of them. The last step was bringing all elements together, which usually takes a lot of [time and] attention to detail."



01 | BASE RENDER
First of all the body of the character was modelled and rendered out in Cinema 4D so that it could form the basis of the image.



02 | TEXTURE AND COLOURS
Using stock images I completed the character and balanced the colours of all parts of the body. I applied a real texture of an out-of-date carrot to the character to get a realistic look.



03 | ADDING DETAILS
I added a prisoner's shackle to the leg, and painted in shadows under the chain. For the drop shadow I used the original shadow from the shackle image and set it to Multiply mode.



04 | MORE DETAILS
The green leaves are from a stock image of a fresh carrot. To make it look faded I bent it with the Warp tool.



05 | BACKGROUND
This image from a stock photo worked perfectly for the scene. I used a slight Gaussian blur on the fridge door to bring focus to the area where the character is supposed to be placed.



06 | PLACEMENT AND SCALE
Initially I just placed the character and the milk carton without shadows, just to find the right scale for the objects. The milk carton was left blank to keep the focus on the character.



07 | SHADOWS AND REFLECTION
The fridge controller did not work well so I moved it a bit further away from the character. I also painted in shadows and reflections. The shadow on the milk carton was rendered in Cinema 4D.



08 | VIGNETTE
Finally I added a vignette to reinforce the focal point of the composition and enhance the light coming out of the open fridge door.

3D AND PHOTOSHOP

CC MAKES IT EASIER TO CREATE WITH 3D OBJECTS

Photoshop has been an essential part of texturing static 3D imagery for a while now, and the 3D updates to Photoshop CC have made this even easier. You can extrude 3D assets from 2D layers and objects, or import a host of common 3D file types from Blender, Cinema 4D and many more. This makes it a cinch to combine 3D and 2D elements for incredibly detailed artwork.



Keep cold in your fridge not in your heart:
This image combined Photoshop and Cinema 4D
to create realistic depth with a cartoon look

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PAINT CONCEPT ART FOR ARCH-VIS

FOLLOW THESE DIGITAL SKETCHING AND PAINTING TECHNIQUES TO CREATE AN ARCHITECTURAL PIECE READY FOR 3D RENDERING

Learn how to use Photoshop to create a complex architectural piece from scratch with this tutorial. You will see how a simple sketch is established followed by detailed shading and texturing steps and eventually final touches that will help present your design in the best way possible.

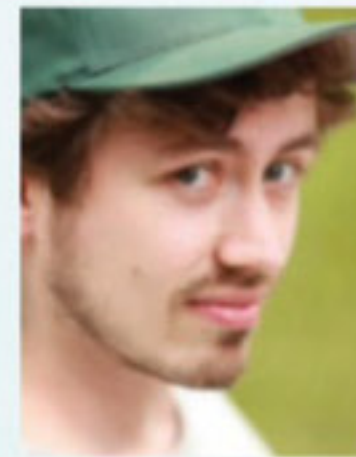
Photoshop is perfect for working on architectural sketches and paintings. There are a vast variety of tools, techniques and shortcuts built in to the software that makes it easy for both beginners to jump in and professionals to speed up their process of creating artwork. The time it takes a skilled artist to complete

something is a huge factor in production, therefore quite often a conceptual artwork like the one shown in this tutorial is only one version of many you may provide to your art director. Being fast and efficient is the key to surviving as a successful Photoshop artist.

With this tutorial you will learn shortcuts and alternative techniques that will enhance your skillset.

This piece is created as concept art that will later be rendered into full 3D arch-vis for an advertising campaign. You can see the completed renders and video here at www.tinyurl.com/qxye8fm.





OUR EXPERT

RAMÓN VOIGT

www.behance.net/rammmon

Ramón is a concept artist in the film, television and advertising industry creating interior, architecture and environment artwork. For several years he has worked at LIGA 01 Computerfilm for clients like Audi, Base, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, ARD and Commerz-Bank.



WORK IN PROGRESS FROM SKETCH TO FINISHED ARTWORK



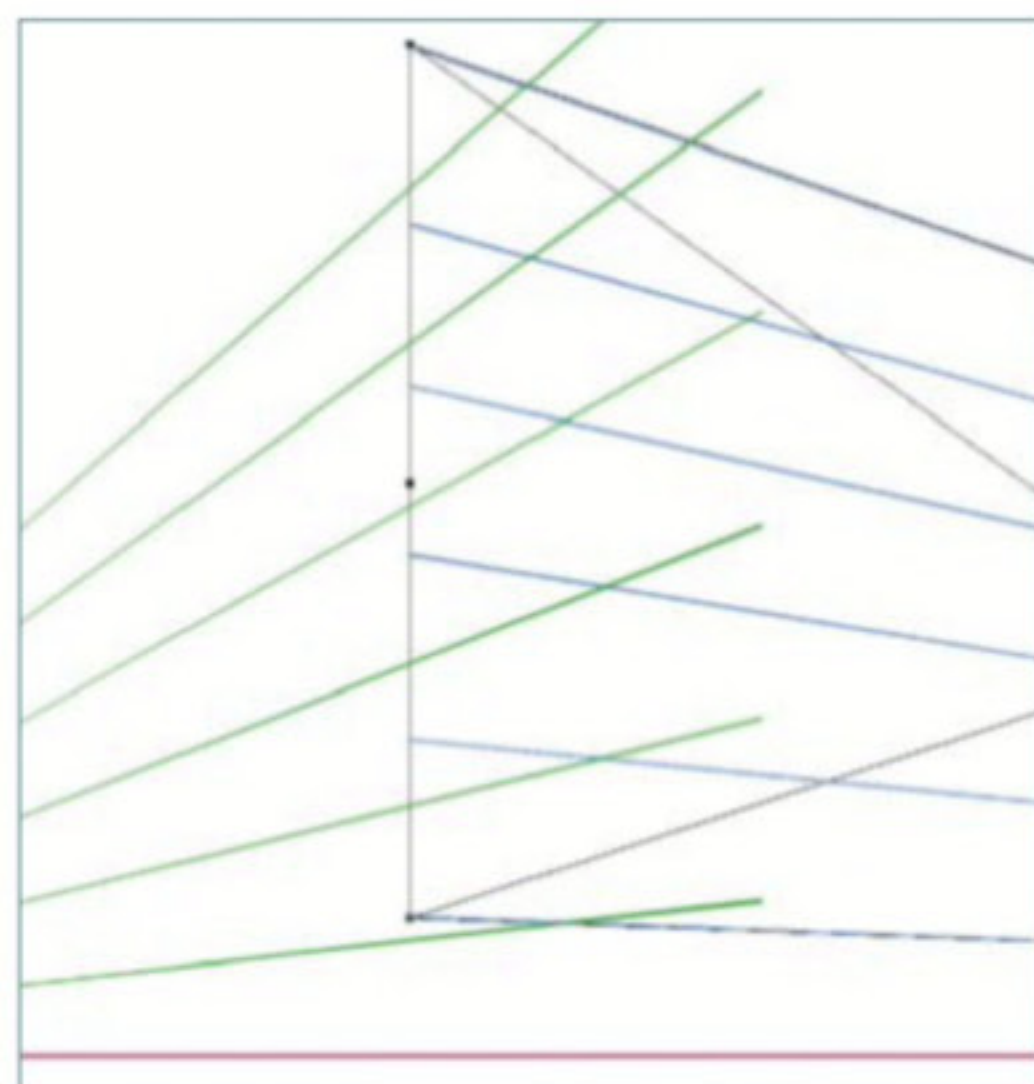
Progress 1: Create an architectural sketch



Progress 2: Add a light source, textures and detail

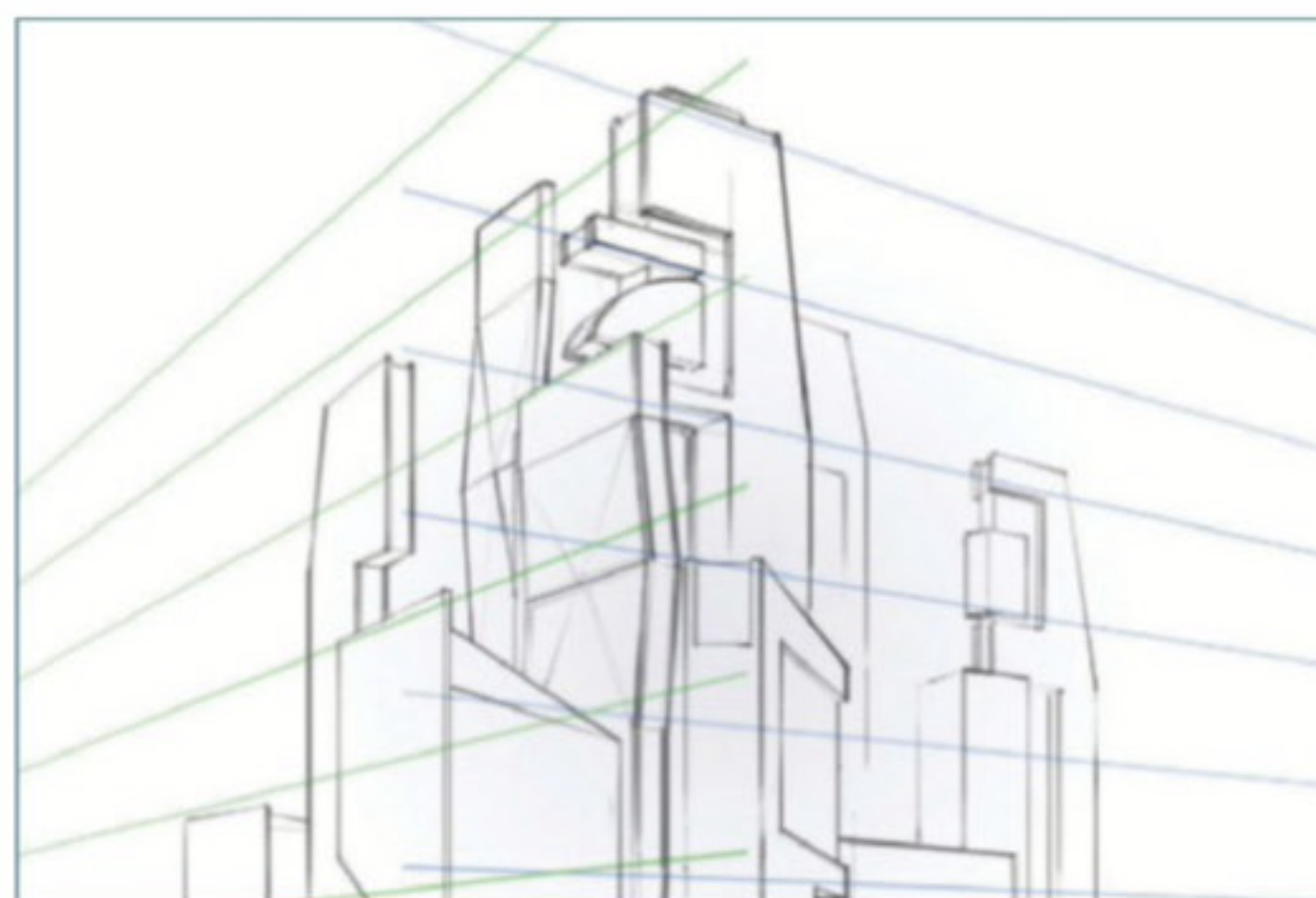


Progress 3: Presentation is everything



01 | SETTING UP THE PERSPECTIVE

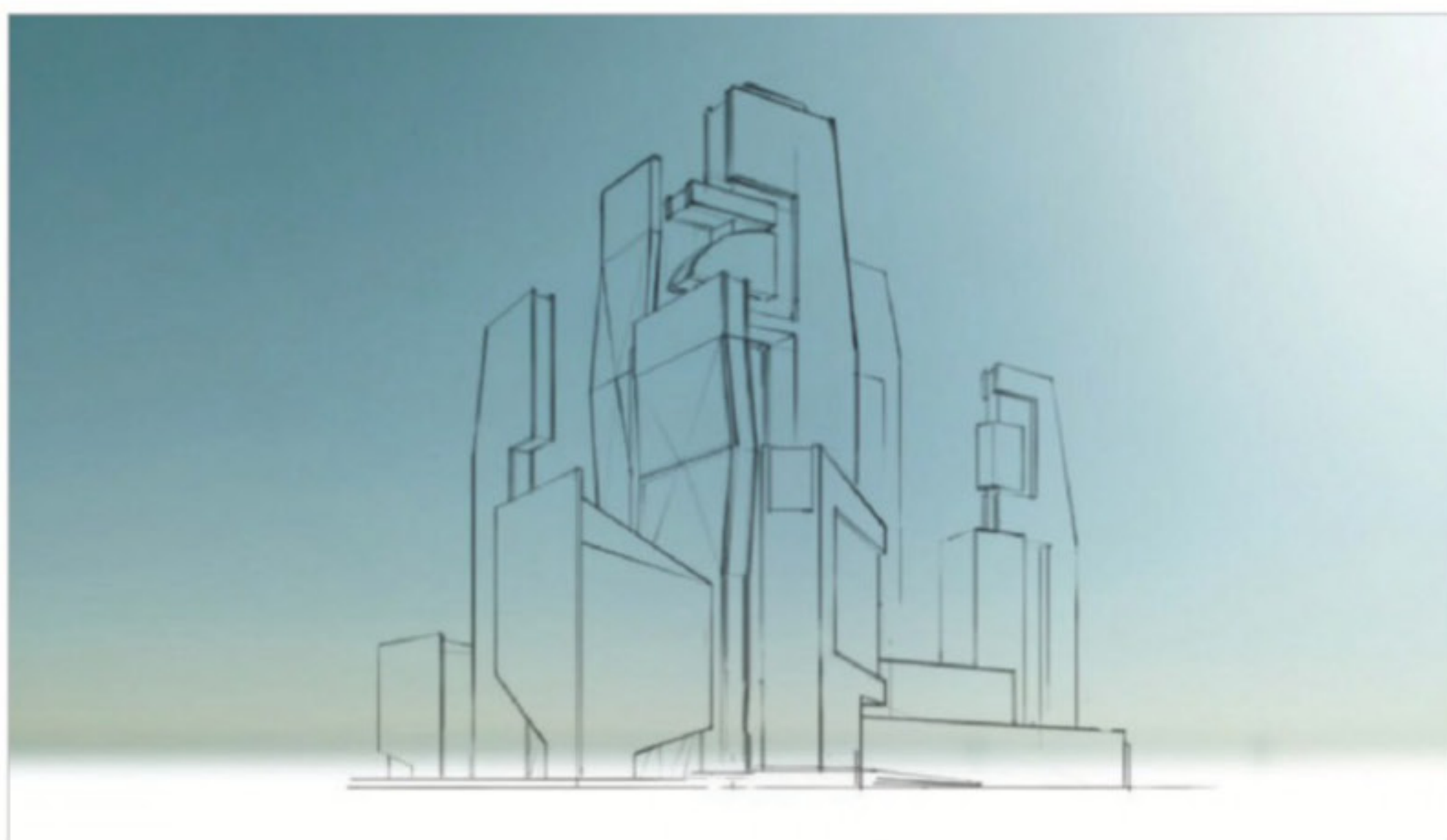
Open a new document sized at least 3840x2160 (double HD 1920x1080). Make your mind up on how you want your architecture to be presented. Put your horizon line in the lower part of the picture and vanishing points slightly out of frame. Create a new layer and paint a straight line for the horizon. On a new layer create several parallel horizontal lines. Right-click and Convert to Smart Object. This enables you to make changes easily later. Now go to Edit>Transform>Perspective and adjust the lines so they vanish towards the horizon. Repeat this for a second vanishing point. This should ensure a solid basic two-point-perspective for a skyscraper design.



02 | SKETCH THE BUILDING

Create a new layer and start sketching your complex. Focus on proportion, style and scale. A big help while sketching technical objects or architecture in Photoshop is the Shift button, because it enables you to make straight lines horizontally and vertically. You can also make diagonal lines by making a dot with your brush, then holding down the Shift button and making a dot again somewhere else. Or just rotate your canvas with the hotkey R and make a horizontal or vertical line as described before.

“As a concept artist or digital painter in general it's always useful to create your own library of textures and reference images”



03 | ESTABLISH THE LIGHT

For now you don't need the perspective guidelines any more. You can simply hide the layers or layer group. Before going into shading and detailing the architecture, let's define the light source in the scene. Everything will follow that definition. Use big Soft brushes or the Gradient tool to establish a dramatic saturated sky. Put the sun out of frame and brighten the horizon line a tiny bit. Also make sure the tones of the sky vary from cyan tones to darker indigo blue. This will make it more realistic.

■ QUICK TIP

Before going into shading and detailing the architecture, let's define the light source in the scene. Everything will follow that definition.



04 | CREATE THE SILHOUETTE

Now let's create a silhouette layer for your building. You don't have to make a new layer yet. This comes later and saves you some clicks for now. Just pick the Polygonal Lasso and start making a selection of the outline of your complex, then go to Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid Color. This will create a new adjustment layer with your selection already in the layer mask. Make sure the layer is located right underneath your sketch. Now double-click on the colour icon of the adjustment layer to open the Color Picker. Choose white as your base silhouette to make your buildings pop out in front of the sky.

05 | ADD TEXTURES

Now we want to put some textures in place to have a base to paint on. As a concept artist or digital painter in general it's always useful to create your own library of textures and reference images. Choose one texture of a glass facade, ideally undistorted and photographed from the front. Drag the images onto your canvas. This usually creates a Smart Object of the image. Now match the texture's lines to the picture's perspective. When you are done, hit Enter to end the transformation. If you are not sure about the position of the vanishing points, unhide the guidelines from Step 1. When you are satisfied with the texture, you don't need the Smart Object any more, right-click on the layer and select Rasterize Layer. Next, mask overlapping parts of the texture by painting with black on the layer mask. Repeat this step on a few more surfaces.

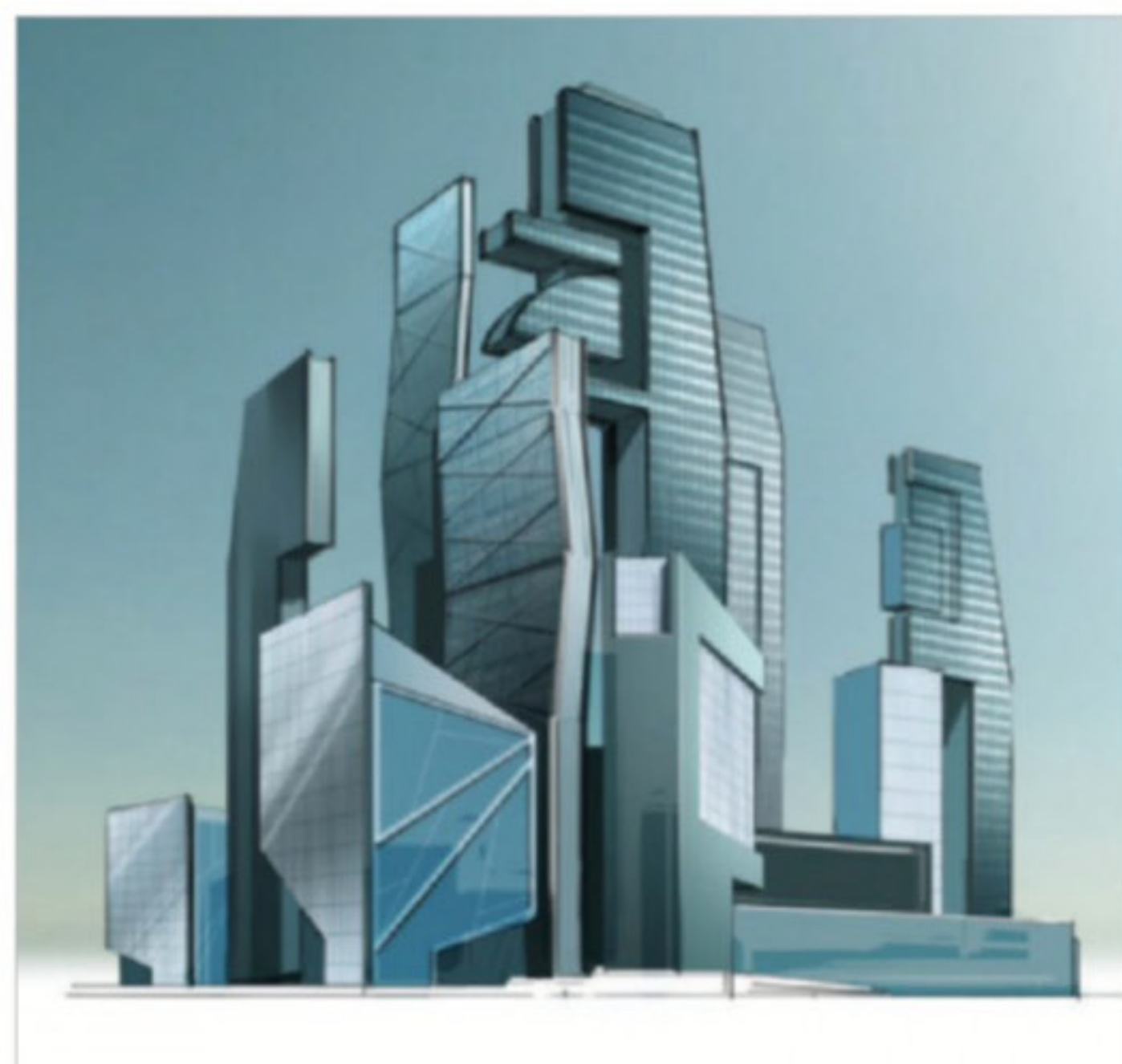
06 | START SHADING

Let's start filling in some parts the texture is not covering up. Always use selection in combination with big, soft brushes. It is a great way to create sharp edges in contrast to smooth, wide surfaces. Also try to combine multiple selection methods to achieve the selection you want. When you have completed one selection simply hold down Shift to add another selection to the existing or hold alt to reduce some parts. When you start shading several areas always have in mind where the light is coming from and where shadows are being cast.



07 | REFINE SHADOWS AND EDGES

Continue working on the overall shading. Ask yourself where objects or buildings are standing very close to each other and creating deep shadow areas. Select a small brush to highlight edges that directly face towards the light source. This will make your objects more brilliant. Always create a new layer from time to time, when you start working on different areas or buildings. This will later make it easier to reflect and make changes if necessary. It also helps a lot in production when your client or art director wants you to remove elements. Then you can simply hide the layer without over-painting those elements.

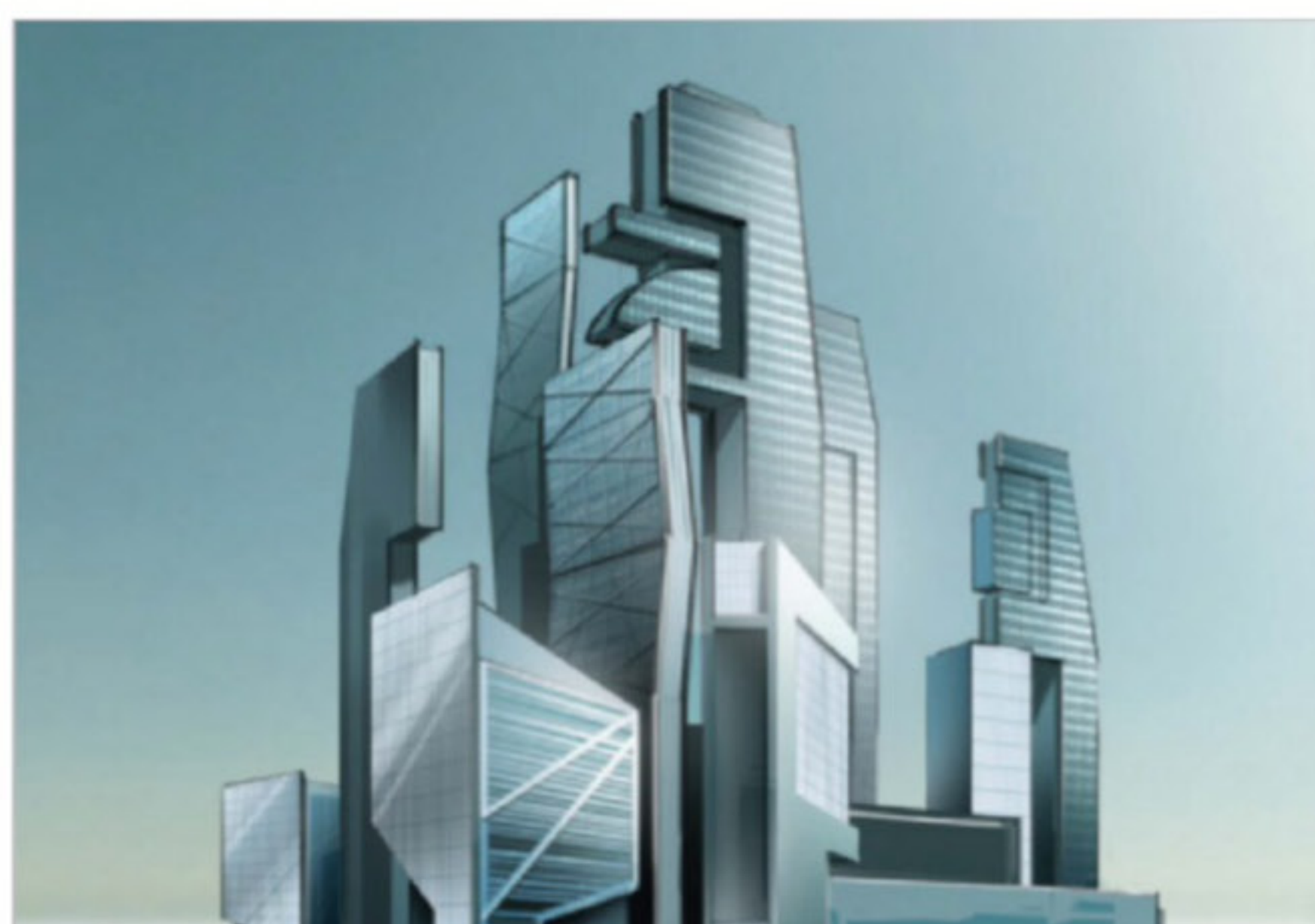


08 | ADD REFLECTIONS

Some parts are still looking very dull and not reflective at all. We are going to change that now. Select a big brush with Pressure Sensitivity set to Opacity. Pick the colour of the surface and shift its brightness a few per cent. Now paint big straight shapes onto the surface to imitate reflection. Erase parts that don't fit by selecting them and hit Backspace or just use the Eraser tool. In such cases it is always helpful to look at real reflections and references to train yourself and learn.

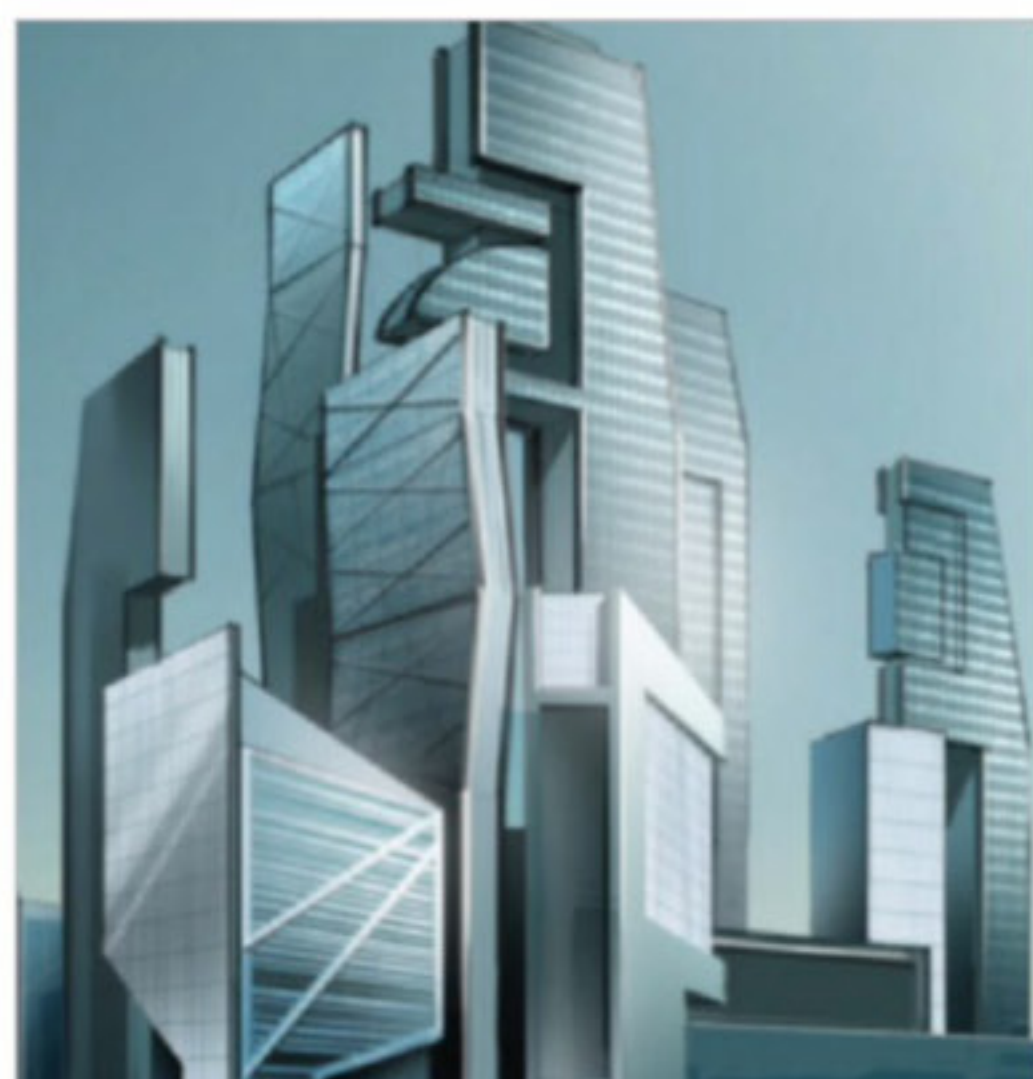
■ QUICK TIP

Real reflections behave in different ways and the best ones for your purposes when painting architecture are diffuse reflections. These don't reflect accurate details, they reflect softer light and shade, so they add instant realism without needing accuracy.



09 | ADD LIGHT AND SHADOW

In this step we continue making our building complex sculptural with light and shadow. You can achieve that by pushing some shapes further inside the form by selecting an area and paint in a darker value. Also pick white and paint some big overall glares on a new layer to strengthen the light side of the buildings.

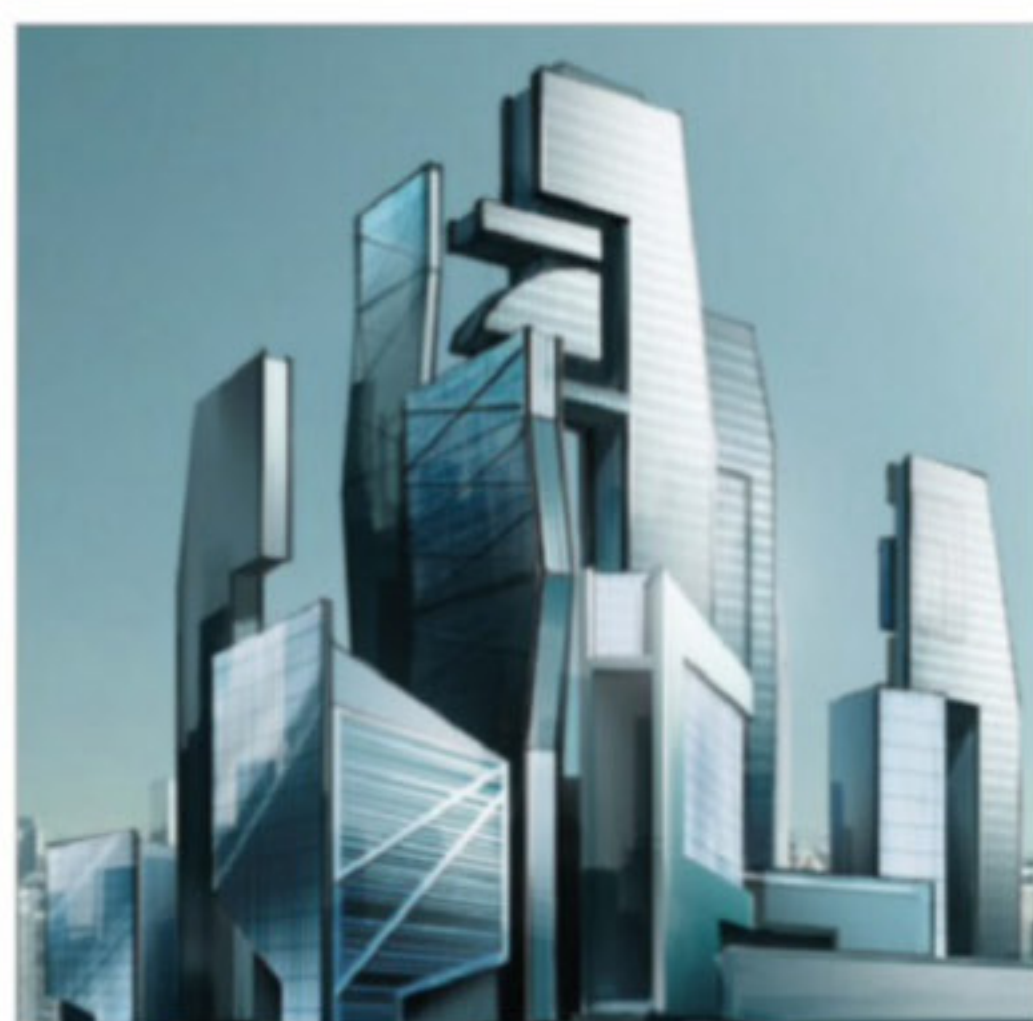


10 THE DETAILS

Now go ahead and continue refining edges and make certain details pop out. The whole process of adding detail can be very long. You need to figure out by yourself how much effort you want to put in or how much time you have been given by the client.

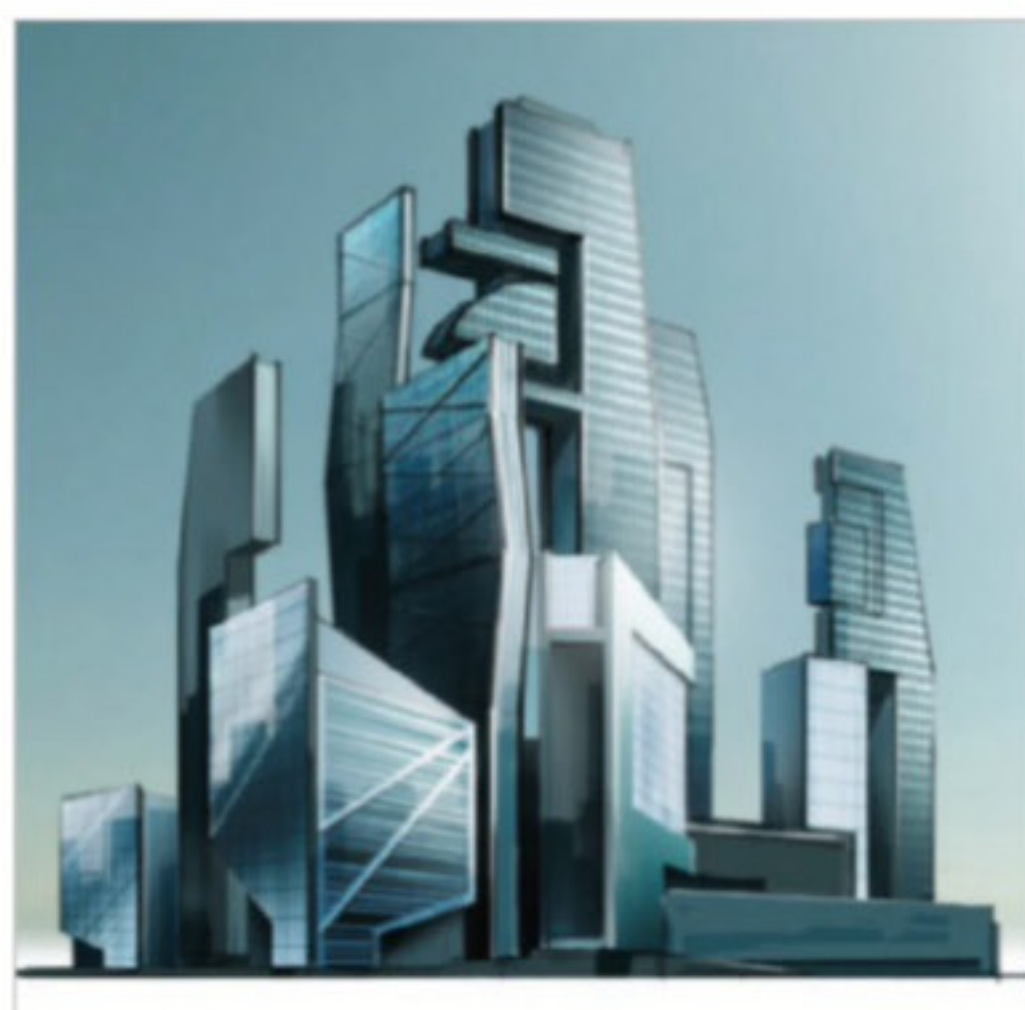
QUICK TIP

There is one more technique to check your values. Simply create a black layer on the very top of your layer stack and set its blend mode to Color. Now your image turns black-and-white and you can clearly analyse your values.



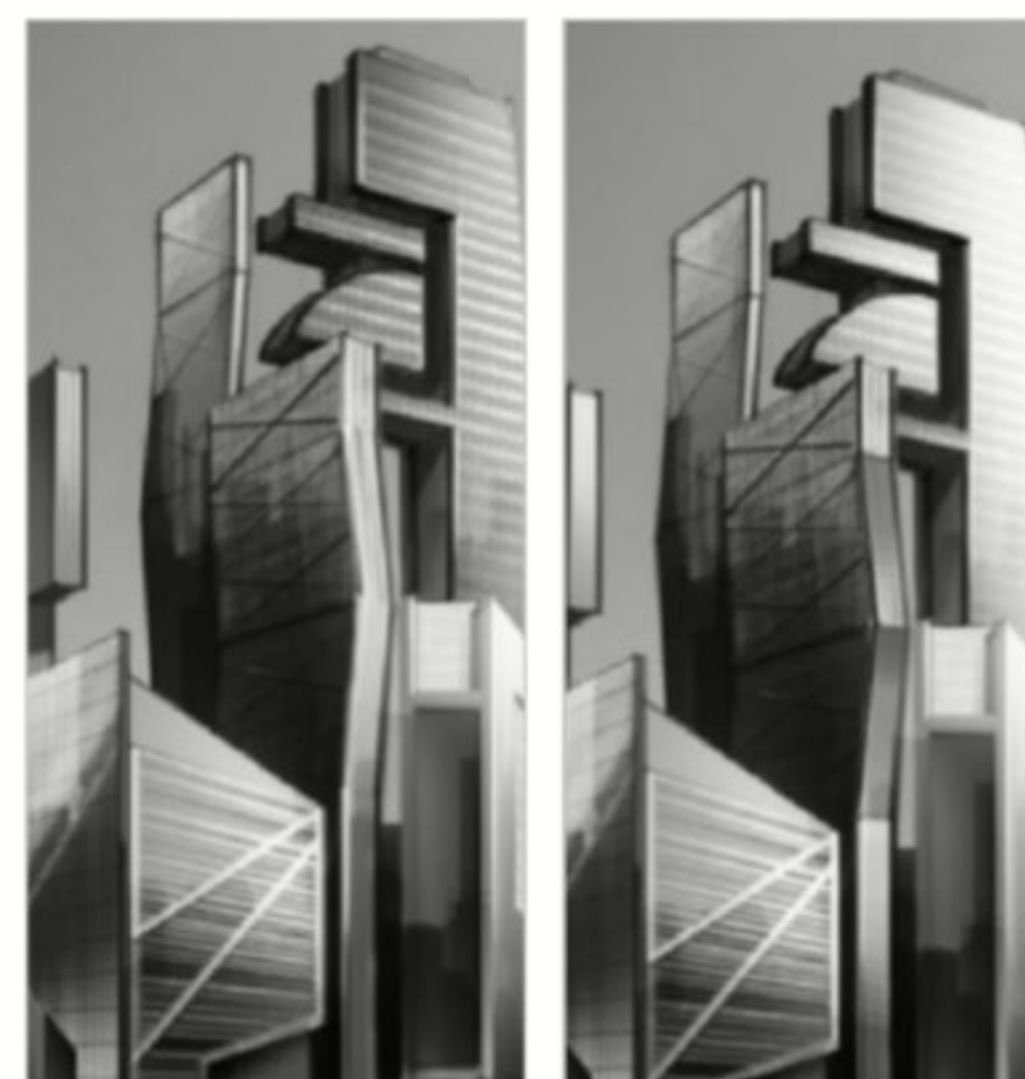
13 CREATE DEPTH

To create more dimension in the scene let's put a skyline in the background to make this complex integrated in a huge city environment. Look for images that fit our perspective and pay attention to resolution. We are creating a mid-size artwork and do not want pixelated elements in between. Drag the skyline onto the canvas and Rasterize it. Move the image beside our main complex and scale it down. Select all the buildings and shore elements you want to keep. Click on the layer mask icon to mask the skyline. Copy the layer by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+J and move it to the other side. Try to use different parts of the skyline to avoid repetition.



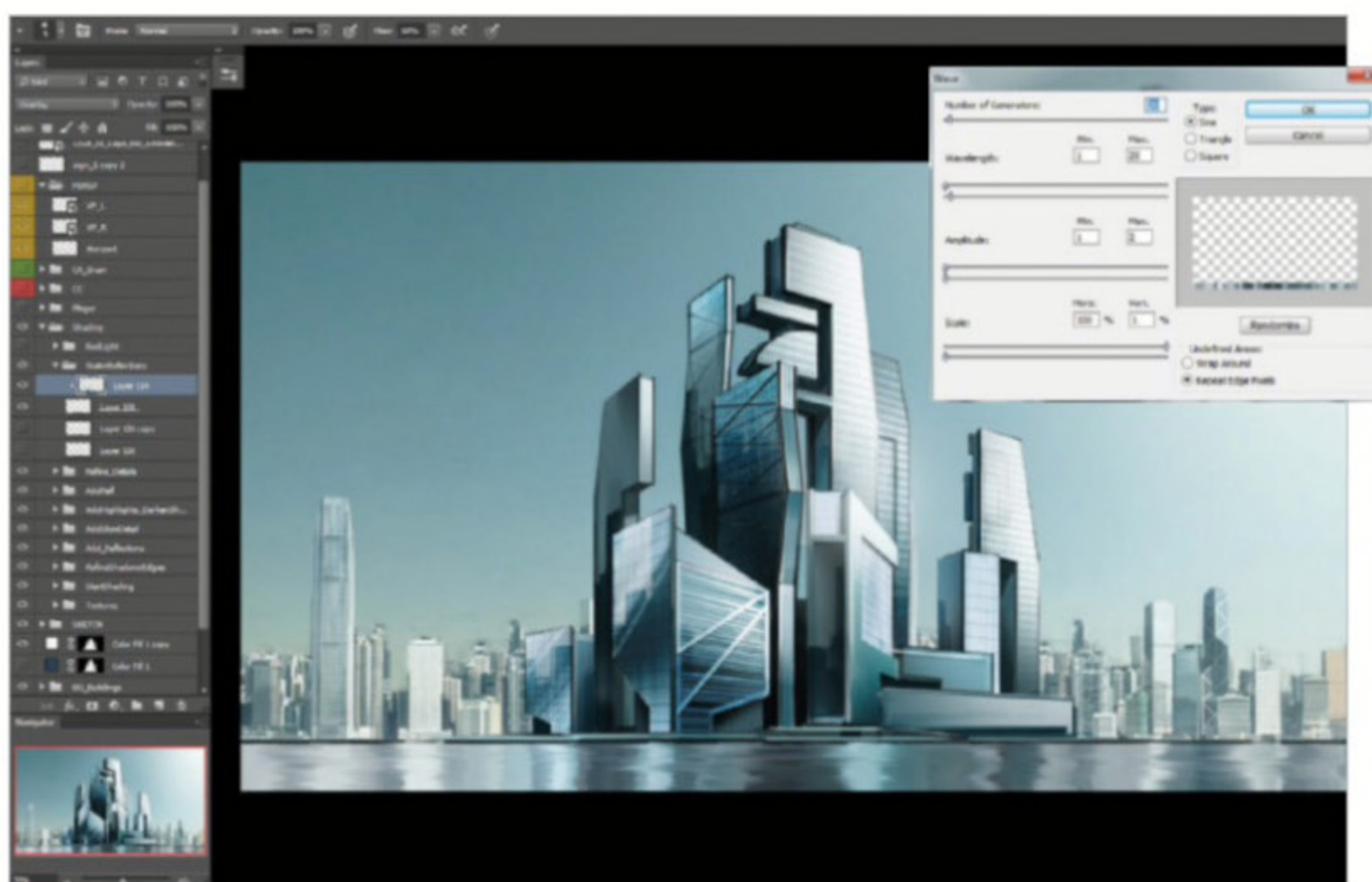
11 INSERT OVERALL REFLECTIONS

Let's add more reflections to the buildings and the surroundings. Create a new layer and paint dark shapes inside the facades. Don't be afraid of adding too much. You are working with layers. Everything is separate. When you are done, create a layer mask and reduce and refine those painted reflections. Now go to the blend mode drop-down menu and select Overlay. This will not only darken some areas but push the saturation. In cases like this Overlay is a fun and powerful effect.



12 REFINE DETAILS AND CHECK VALUES

In this phase we are reconsidering the overall brightness of the buildings one more time. At this stage the main tower in the middle is kind of blurring into the blue sky. A common technique to check your composition is simply to zoom out very far. Then you see the silhouette is not clearly readable. So we are going to make our main focal point pop up once more. Again create a new layer, select the area to brighten and paint with a big soft brush until the tower sticks out.

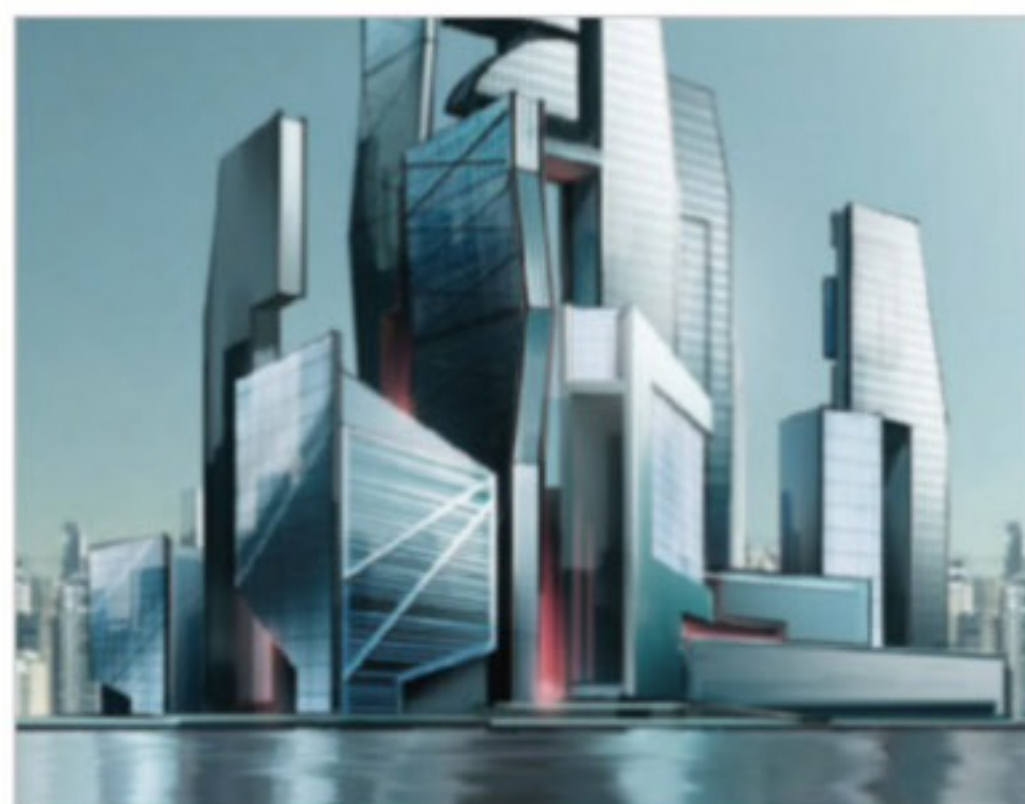


14 COMPLETE THE SCENE

There is still one blank part of the image left in the lower area. It would be really nice to add a water surface here, just to reflect some highlights and parts of our buildings. Create a new blank layer and place a rectangular selection in the area where you want to illustrate the water. Now select various shades and colours of the main and background buildings located just above with the Eyedropper tool (Shortcut I) and paint soft vertical reflections (Alternatively: hold Alt to switch your cursor to the Color Picker, while using the Brush tool). Now go to Filter>Distort>Wave and put in the following settings: Number of Generators: 20, Wavelength Min. 1, Max. 25, Amplitude Min. 1, Max. 2 and Scale Horiz. 100% and Vert. 1%, Undefined Areas: Repeat Edge Pixels. Now you have a good basis to refine the water. Do so by playing around with the Wave filter, by adding tiny horizontal brush strokes with white and distorting the surface a bit more with the Smudge tool.

15 | ADD COLOUR

In this step we are going to add some detail in the form of colour to the centre of the complex. Let's just pretend in between those buildings is a huge atrium and the company who owns this facility is hosting a big event right there. Of course they are going to have very powerful and amazing light-shows going on. We are going to use that story to make our picture more interesting. Pick a red tone, which is a complementary colour to the overall blue of the image, and paint in details, where the light would hit the facades.



16 | ADD DETAIL FOR SCALE

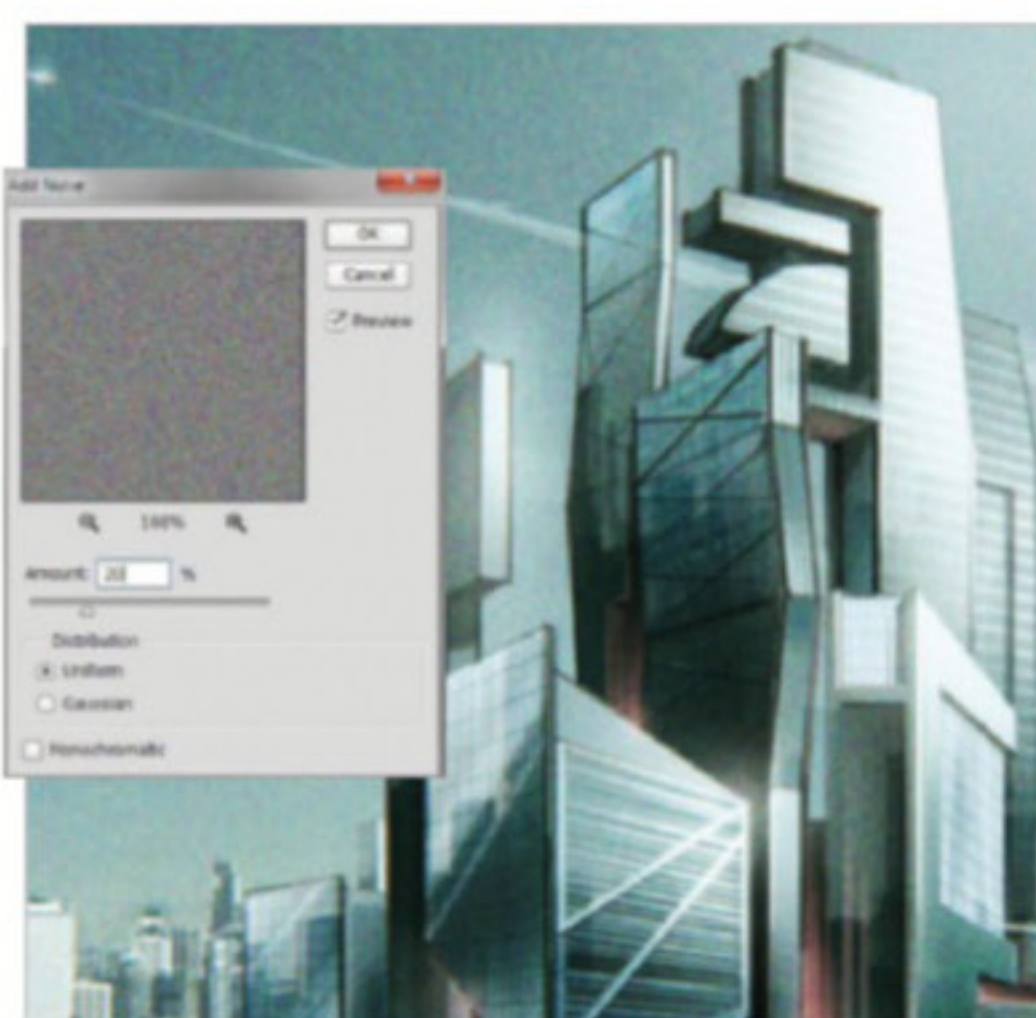
We are now adding an aeroplane and some jet trails to intensify the metropolitan feel of the scene and illustrate the big scale of the complex. Paint a tiny white shape of a plane in the top left corner of the image. Add a soft glare to it to make it pop out. Now on a separate layer, paint two long, soft, diagonal and white strokes, where one should obviously connect with the plane. Now again use the Smudge tool to make them more organic and cloud-like.

“Smart Objects and adjustment layers provide the flexibility necessary to give you a truly non-destructive workflow”



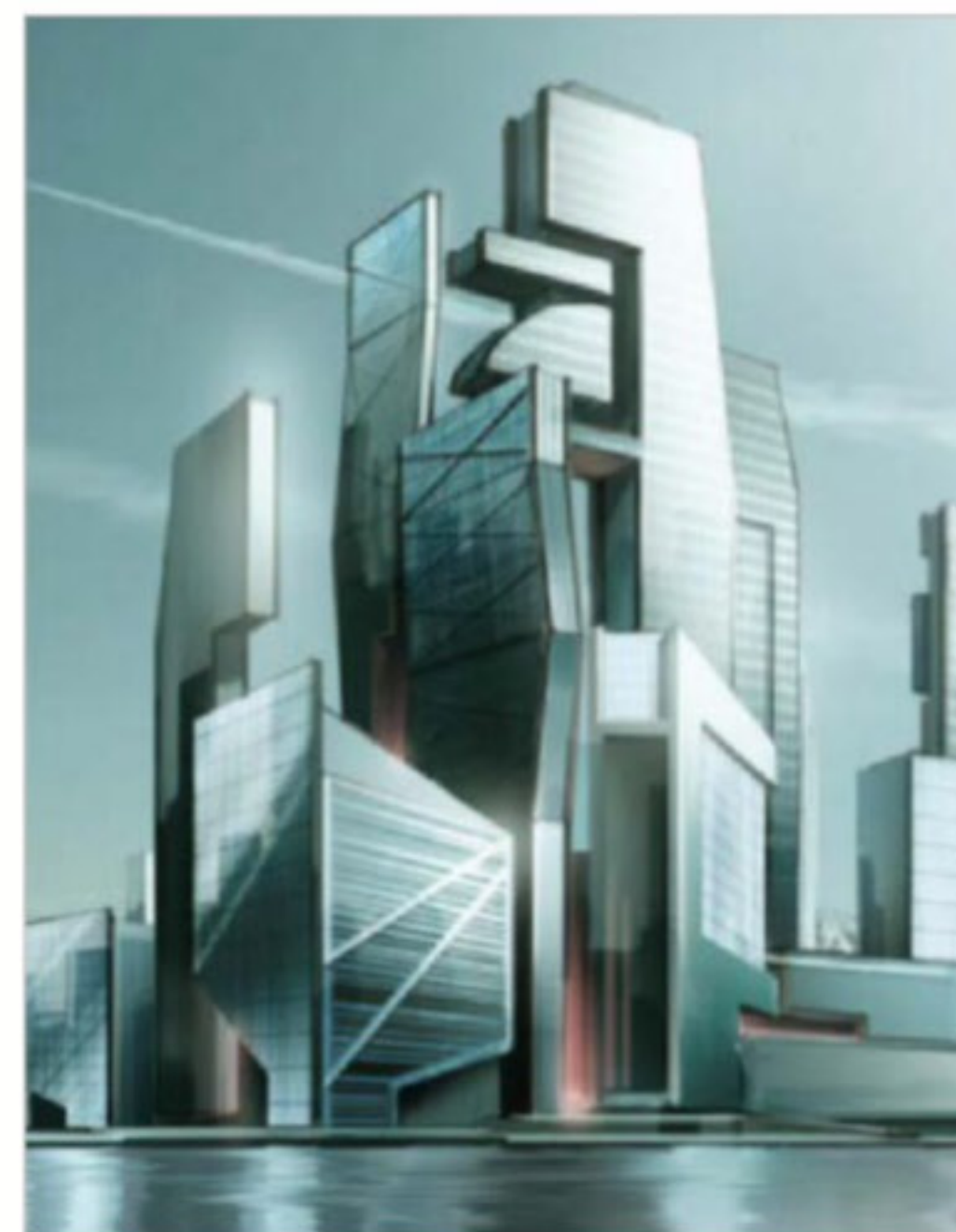
18 | ADD CHROMATIC ABERRATION

To push the image ahead of its pure, digital feel, we are going to add chromatic aberration and grain. Click on the top layer in your layer stack, now create a new merge layer of everything visible on the canvas, by pressing Shift+Alt+Cmd/Ctrl+E. Select this layer and go to Filter>Lens Correction. Open the second tab, Custom, and adjust the Fix Red/Cyan Fringe to +100 and the Fix Blue/Yellow Fringe to -100. Hit OK. When you zoom in you will notice some slight colour shifting around the edges.



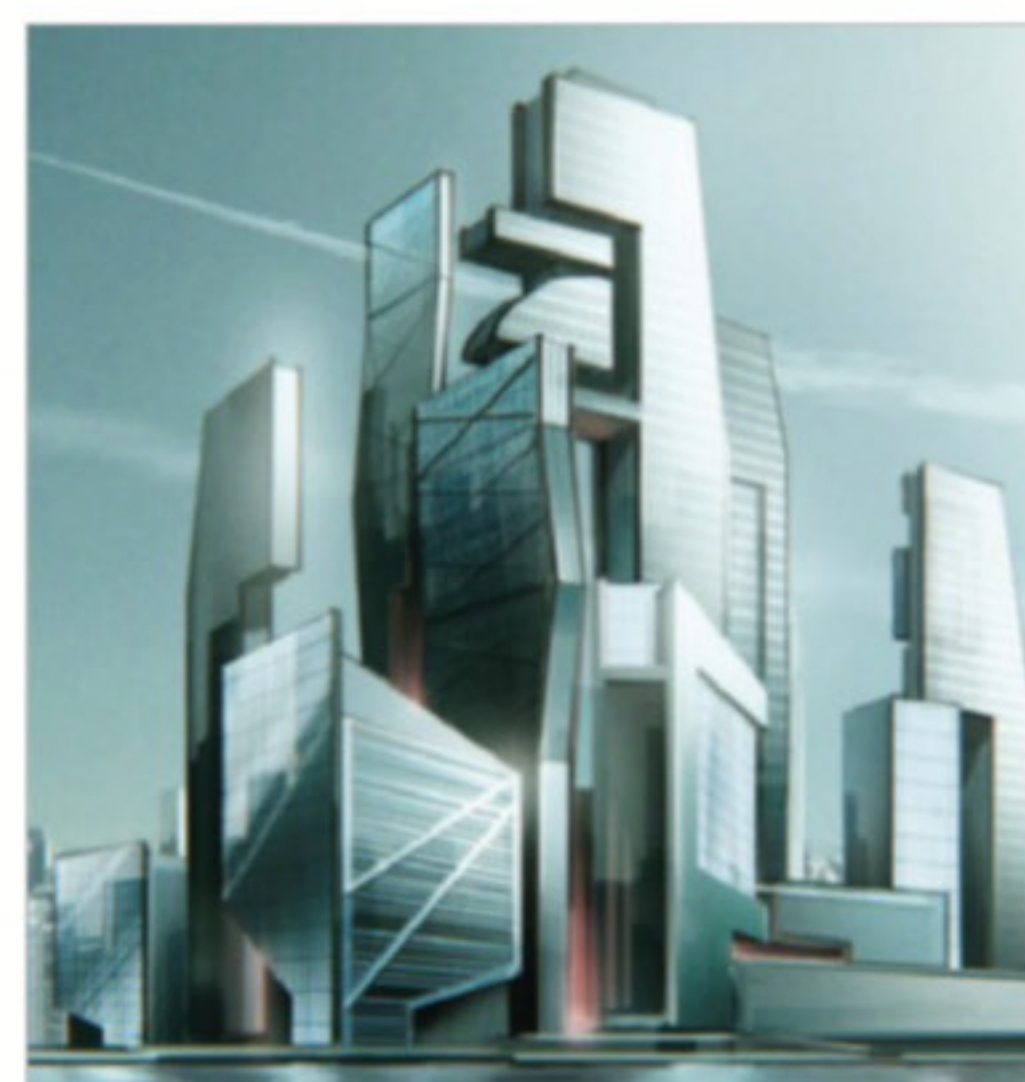
19 | FINAL OVERALL TEXTURE

Let's put some film grain on top of the picture. We do so by creating a new empty layer at the very top of the picture. Fill this layer with a 50% grey (RGB 128/128/128 or HSB 0/0/50) by selecting the Paint Bucket tool and clicking on the canvas. Now go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Set the amount to 10% and make sure Uniform is selected and Monochromatic is Off. Now go to Filter>Noise>Median and set the Radius to one pixel. The last thing is setting your layer's blend mode to Overlay.



17 | COLOUR CORRECTION

At first add a new layer, pick a soft brush with the Opacity set to 20% and paint in some more glares. Now go to the adjustment layer panel and select Color Balance and push the colours to a slightly warmer look. Cyan/Red +1, Magenta/Green +15 and Yellow/Blue -10. Create a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and lower the Saturation by -30. Yes, that looks better. Create one more layer, add some more blues for the sky, brighten the insolation from the right and push down the value of the top left corner. Group all these layers by selecting them and hit Cmd/Ctrl+G.



20 | GOOD PRACTICE

Last but not least it's important to label your artwork with the project name, subject or task, creation date and your name. In bigger productions whether commercial, game or feature, where several artists are constantly creating output, it is very useful to put this information into the picture so supervisors, producers and directors can refer to certain artwork at a glance. With your artwork finalised, it's time for it to be passed to the 3D department for rendering.



© Carlos Quevado

“Mechanical Dragon is a fantasy piece with a lot of steampunk influence; that was my main inspiration”



MECHANICAL DRAGON

CARLOS QUEVEDO

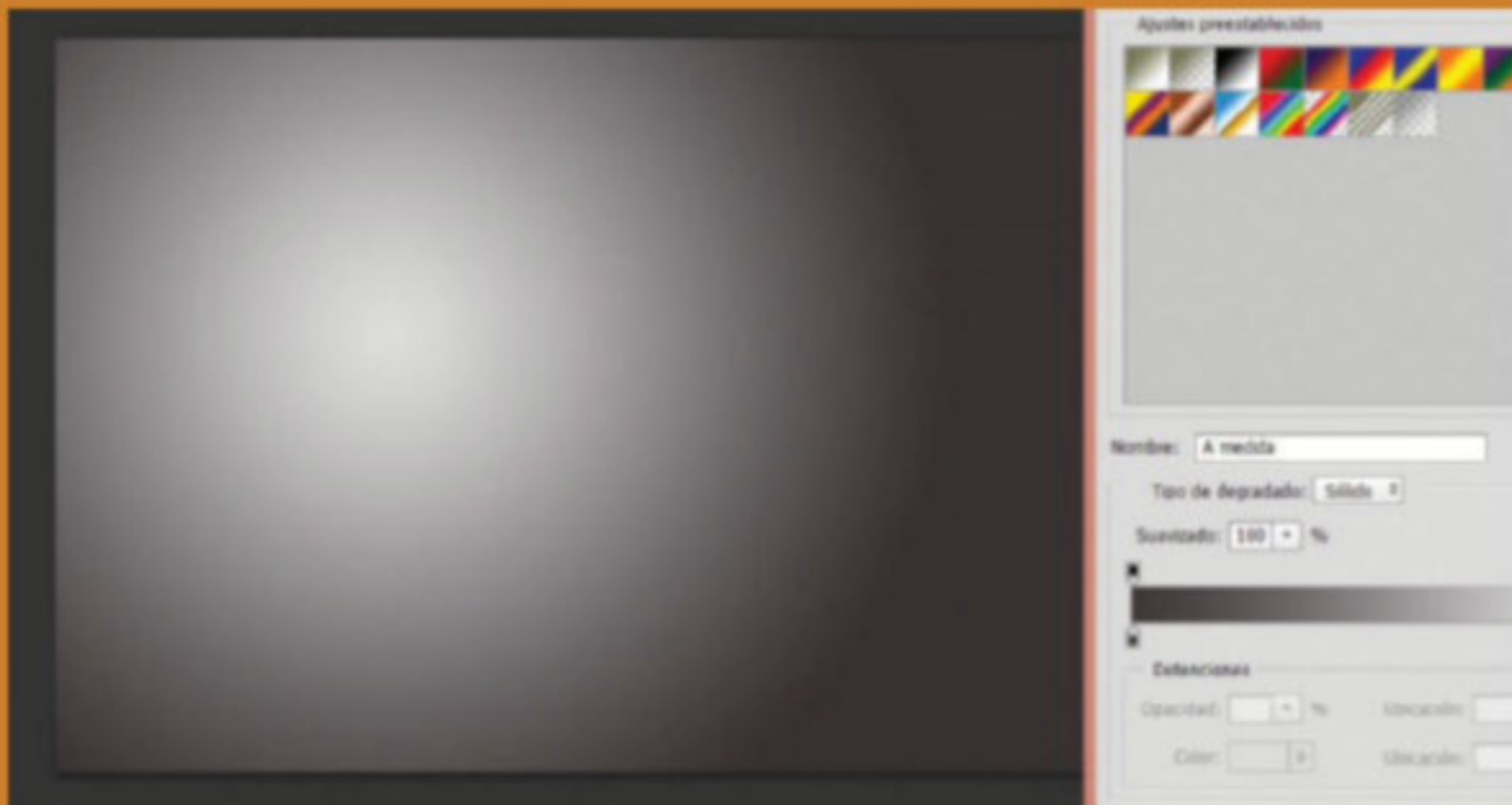
HOW CARLOS QUEVEDO COMBINED PHOTO ELEMENTS WITH DIGITAL PAINTING TO CREATE THIS STEAMPUNK-INSPIRED PIECE

Photoshop is the primary tool in Venezuelan artist Carlos Quevedo's workflow. "With Photoshop there is no limit to [how you] create or modify something," he says of his love of the program. His favourite tools are blend modes – "By using colour layers in different modes I

can create that deep atmosphere to blend the elements well" – and he builds up his artwork by combining his own photography, stock photos, and digital painting, as he did in *Mechanical Dragon*. "Mechanical Dragon is a fantasy piece with a lot of steampunk influence; that was my main inspiration.

I wanted to create this interesting mechanism of gears and metal pieces incorporating a dragon skull (the skull was provided by ekoh-stock), as well as the woman who wears that fiery helmet."

Discover more of Carlos Quevedo's beautiful artwork at carlos-quevedo.deviantart.com.



01 BACKGROUND

I start with a dark-coloured layer with a spot of light according with the light direction of the main elements. This point is more painting than manipulation; I usually create the atmosphere at the beginning.



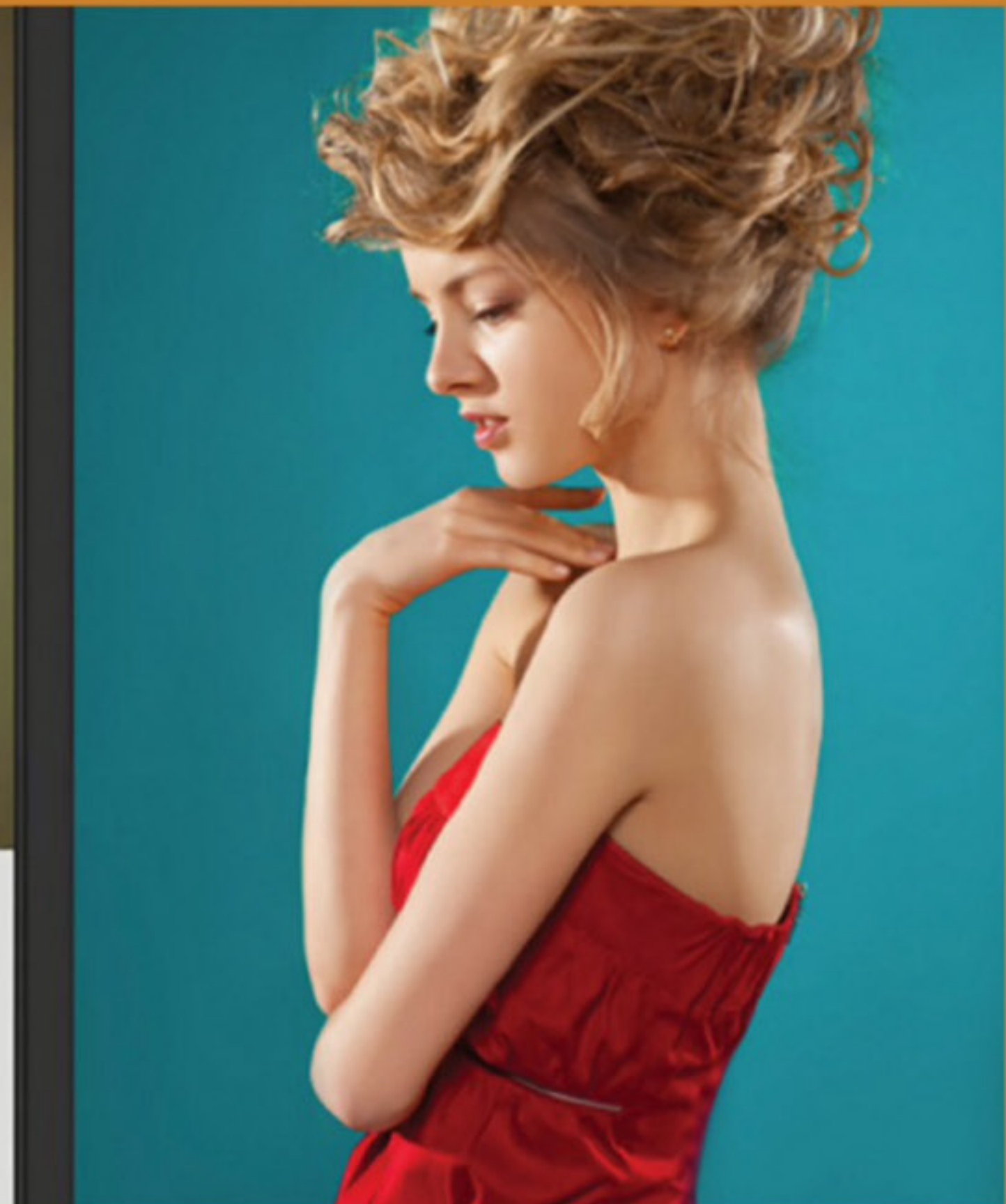
02 ATMOSPHERE

I use several colour layers set to Screen, Lighten and Soft Light, playing with the opacity of each one, to get the dark and deep atmosphere. This group of layers should always be on the top so they affect the layers below. I used an Airbrush in Soft mode to paint different parts of the background.



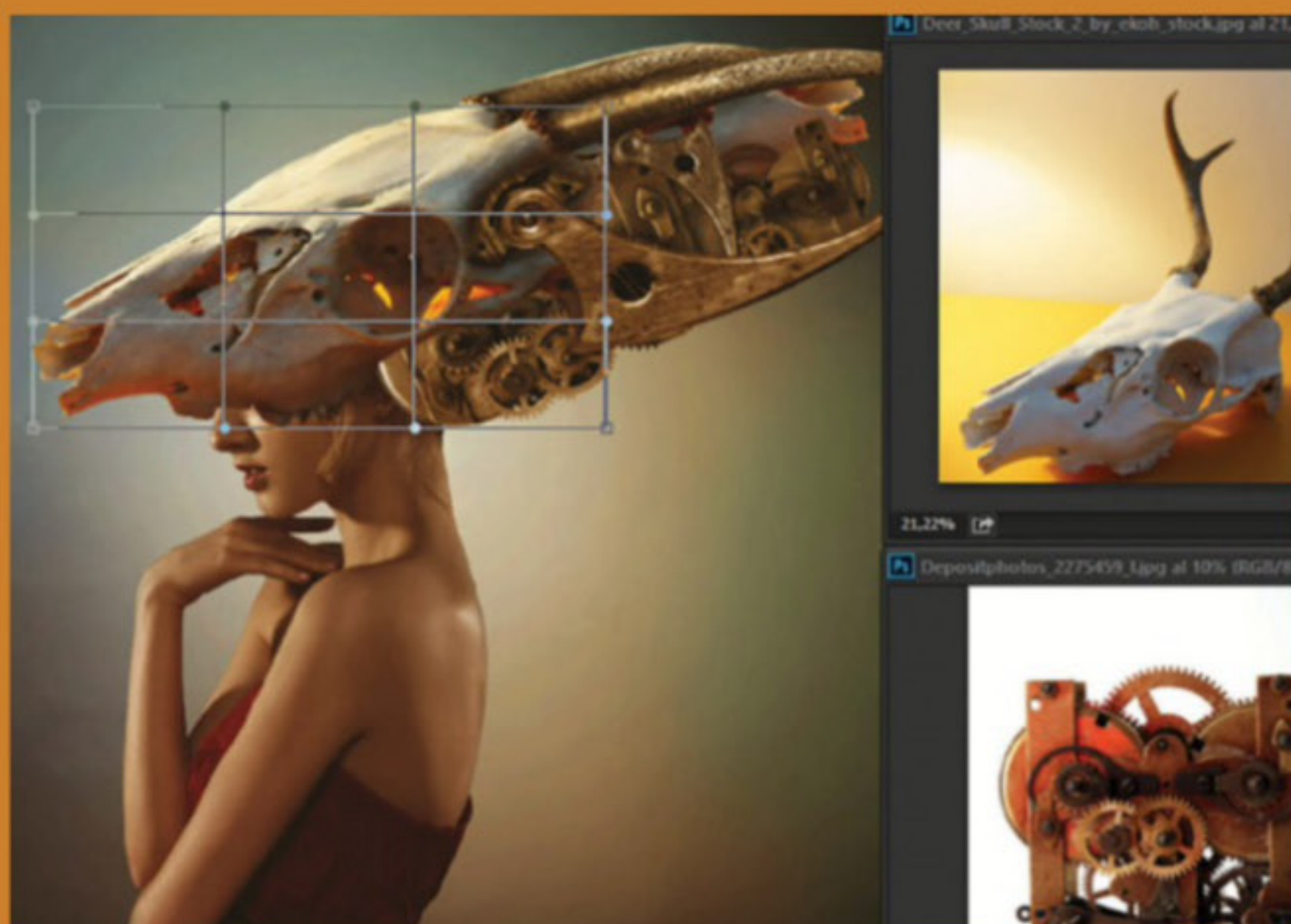
03 ADDING THE CHARACTER

After cleaning the background of the model, I added the girl below the colour layers, then I modified the Saturation of the model to -40% to blend the colours (You can also use a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to do this).



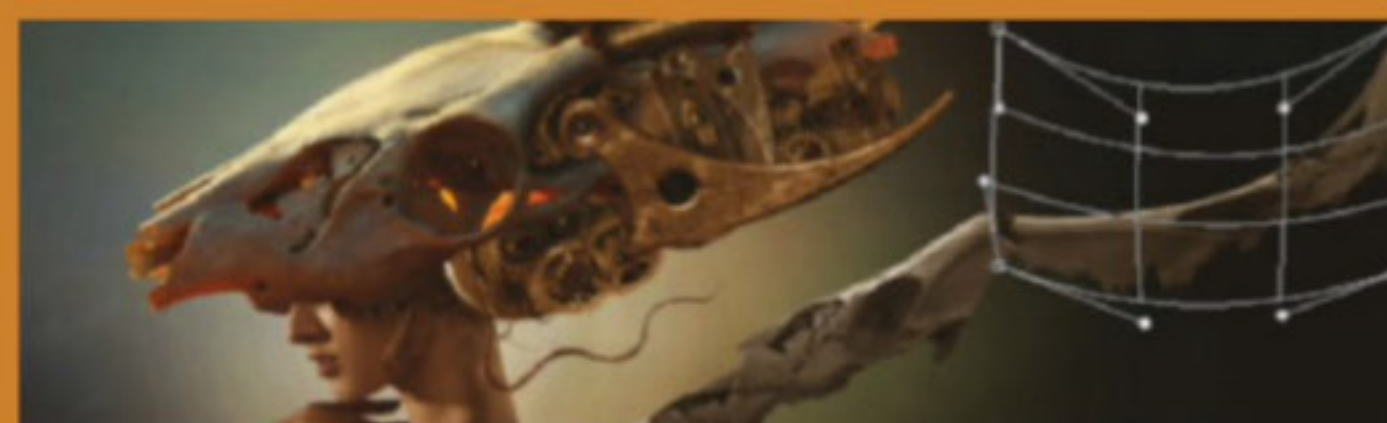
04 MECHANICAL SKULL

With the Warp tool I changed the perspective of the skull a little bit to adapt it to the model's head. To create the mechanical part, I cut off several gears and metals [from a photo] and I duplicated those layers to get more pieces.



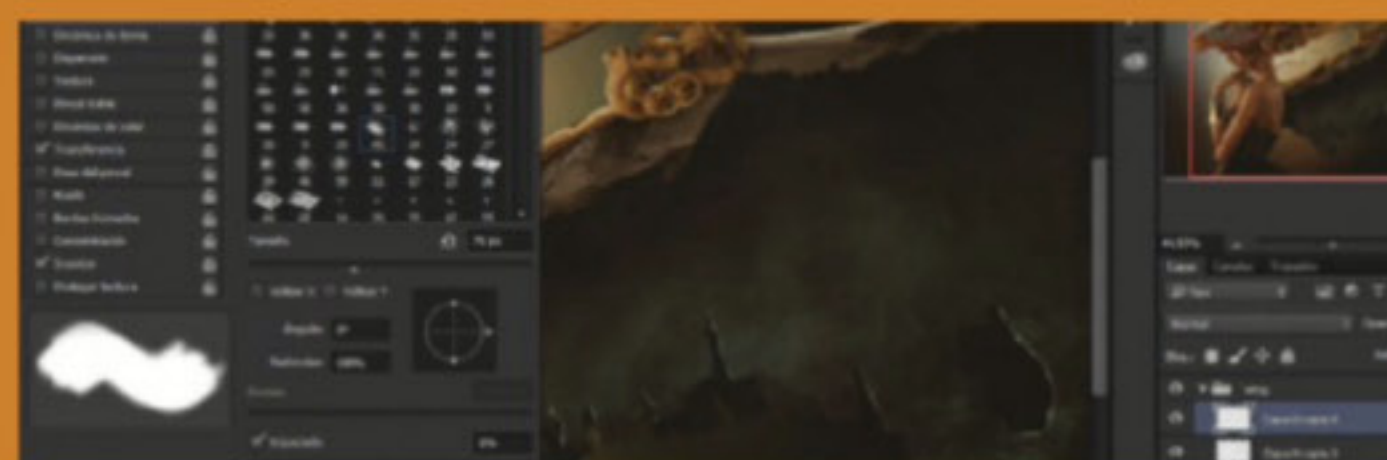
05 WARPING LAYERS

I cut off a piece of the skull to build the bone on the wing. Using the Warp tool I modified the shape, also, the piece on the arm is a duplication of the front part of the skull too. I used some Curves adjustments to get a darker environment.



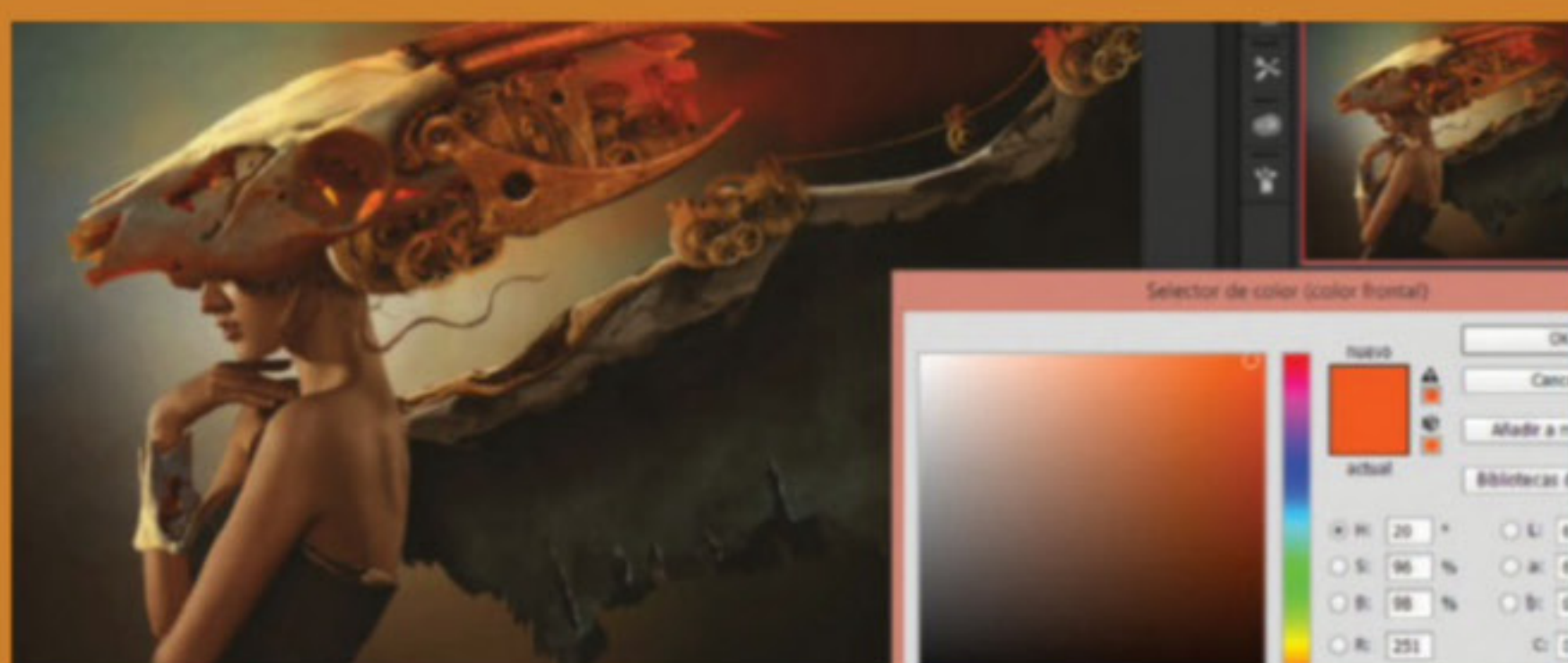
06 PAINTING THE WING

The wing was painted with solid colour at first, then I applied some brushes to give it texture.



07 SOFT COLOUR LAYERS

I used an Airbrush in Soft mode, playing with the opacity, to get the fiery luminescence and that hot look where the dragon throws fire.



08 FIRE AND SPARKS

Using fire [stock photos] is quite easy, normally fire images have a very dark background, so we just change the blend mode of the layer to Screen.



CREATING MULTIPLE ELEMENTS

"The main element was the model and the rest was designed around her. I started creating the background and then I added the model, putting the skull on her head and adding its metallic pieces using the Warp tool to adapt the different parts. The metallic pieces are actually the duplication of a single image adapted to different sizes. The same happens with the bone on the wing, it was made by extracting parts from the skull and using the Transform tool to get the proper shape. The rest of the wing is painted."



The multiple gears on the dragon skull were created by replicating and warping a single image to create many gears of different sizes and shapes

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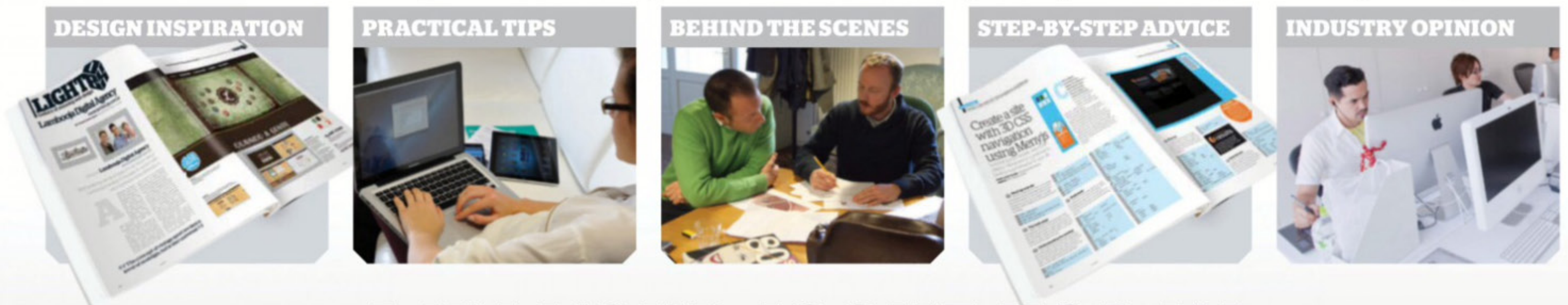


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ADVANCED BLEND MODE TECHNIQUES

LEARN HOW TO CREATE A SCI-FI SCENE USING PHOTOSHOP'S BLEND MODES

In this tutorial you will learn how to create a sci-fi scene with a cinematic feel using blend modes. You will also learn the techniques of photomanipulation and the importance of values to make your image pop out and look like it's from a movie. We will go through some digital painting for the character's hair, so make sure to use a pen tablet instead of the mouse as this will make your workflow much easier.

Since our theme is sci-fi we will also go through creating a futuristic suit for our model using parts of superbikes as our stock, which is a technique that many well known artists use for mech design. We will also add a touch of abstraction to our photomanipulation by blending geometrical shapes and make key post-production edits using adjustment layers, Lens Correction and Smart Sharpen to finish the job.

■ SET UP YOUR STOCK

PLACE AND ENHANCE THE BASIC BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE IMAGE

01 SET UP THE MODEL

First of all we need to set up our model into our canvas, so let's grab the model image from Dreamstime, code: 22992223, then by selecting the Pen tool (P), click and drag on the edges of the model, then Cmd/right-click, select Make Selection, and press Cmd/Ctrl+J to isolate the model on a new layer, and finally place the model into our new canvas.



02 MODIFY THE CONTRAST

Our model looks a little bit flat. What we need is to add some depth, so now we will add contrast by going to Image>Adjustments>Curves and making the Curves an S shape. Don't drag the points deeper as that will ruin the contrast. Next we will grab a Soft Round brush with the blend mode of the brush (not the layer) set to Overlay. Turn down the opacity and start brushing dark parts of the model. Doing this will give you more control instead of doing a regular Brightness and Contrast filter.



03 CREATE THE BACKGROUND

Now it's time to create our background, so grab some bokeh textures from CGtextures.com, place them behind the model layer and change their blend mode to Linear Dodge (Add). Also you can create a new layer, change the blend mode to Screen, and with a Soft Round brush, add some light around the model to make her pop out. Keep in mind that composition is really important, and our bokeh textures should not cover some parts of the canvas because we will place other elements and textures there later. Our background is composed of three bokeh textures so we need to blend them into one texture, to do that create a layer mask and with a Soft Round brush, hide parts of the textures that are not needed.



OUR EXPERT

SOUFIANE IDRASSI
www.artstation.com/artist/cgsoufiane
 @idrassisoufiane

Soufiane Idrassi is a self-taught freelance concept artist and Illustrator based in Meknes, Morocco with five years of experience in digital art.

■ SOURCE FILES

Get the PNG files used to develop the character's suit, plus take a look at the layered PSD on FileSilo.

■ WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM IDEA TO FINAL FINISH



Progress 1: Setting up the model



Progress 2: Creating the suit



Progress 3: Final effects



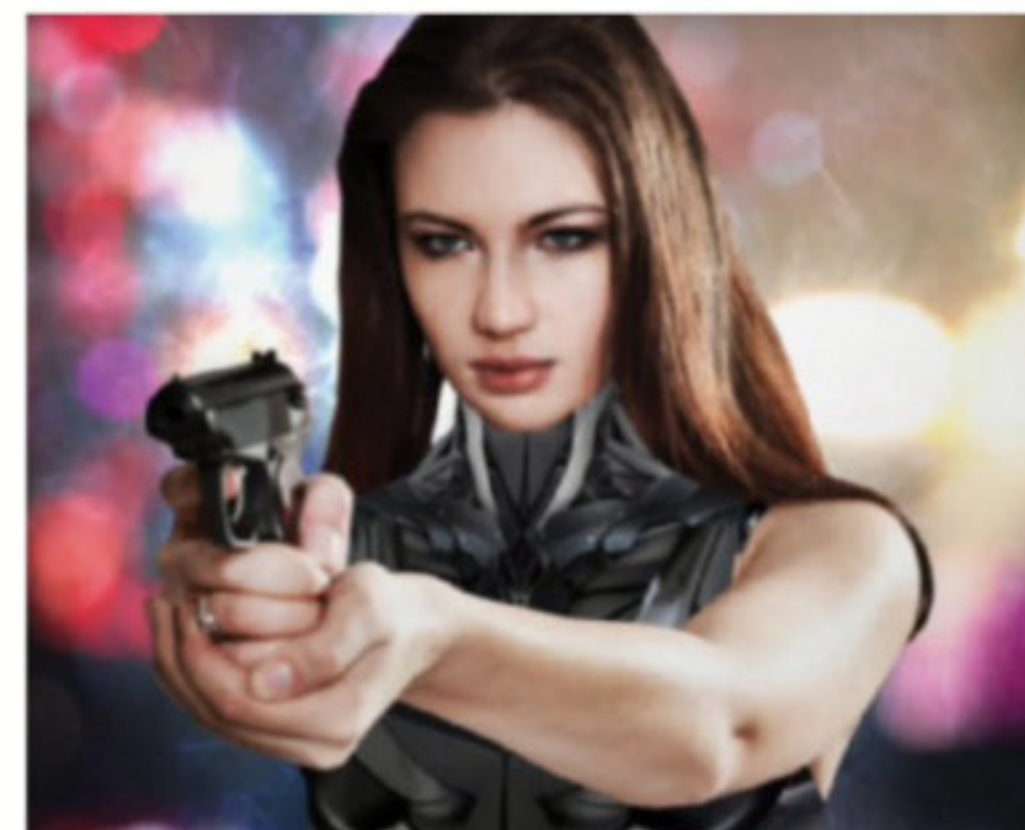
04 | ADD SMOKE EFFECTS

We said earlier that composition is important and the bokeh should not cover the entire scene because we still need to add more elements. Next, we'll add smoke effects to add more texture to the background, so grab some smoke textures, and repeat Step 3, but this time change the blend mode to Color Dodge instead of Linear Dodge (Add), that way the smoke will not ruin the bokeh shapes and it will show clearly on the empty areas that we left earlier. Now we need to blend the model with the background; this is really simple, we just place a smoke texture layer in front of the model layer, place it as shown in the image and turn the blend mode to Linear Dodge (Add).



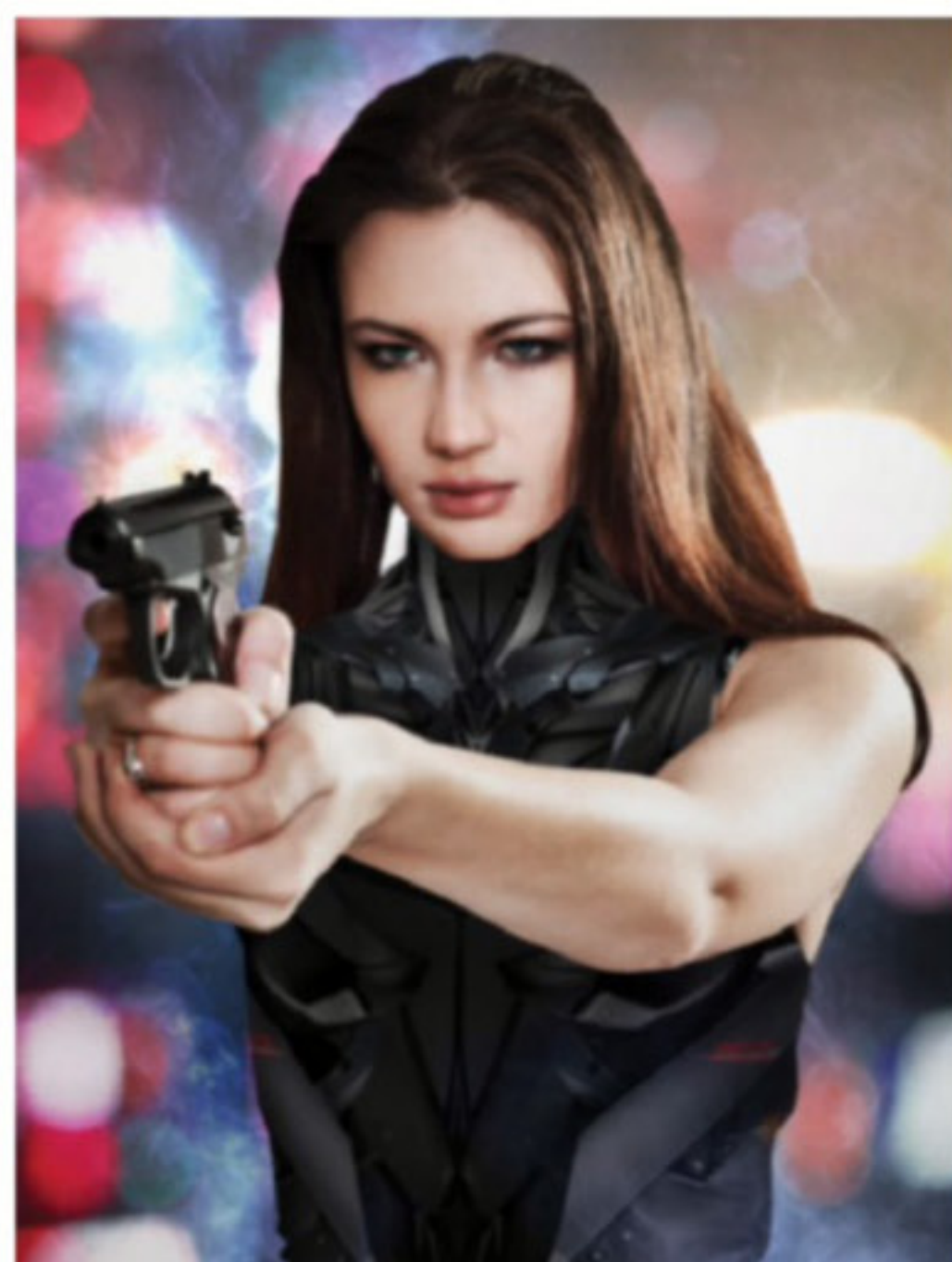
05 | SKETCH THE FUTURISTIC SUIT

Now it's time to add futuristic elements to the scene, but first, before we start designing our suit, we need to have a clear idea about what we will be designing. So create a new layer and, using a pen tablet and a Round brush around 40px, start sketching the shapes on the model that we want to the suit to look like. Here we followed the anatomy of the human body, so that the suit will look functional and practical, and will not hold our girl down. You can still do this step if you don't have a tablet by holding the Shift key and pointing with the mouse to create a straight line.



06 | CREATE THE SUIT

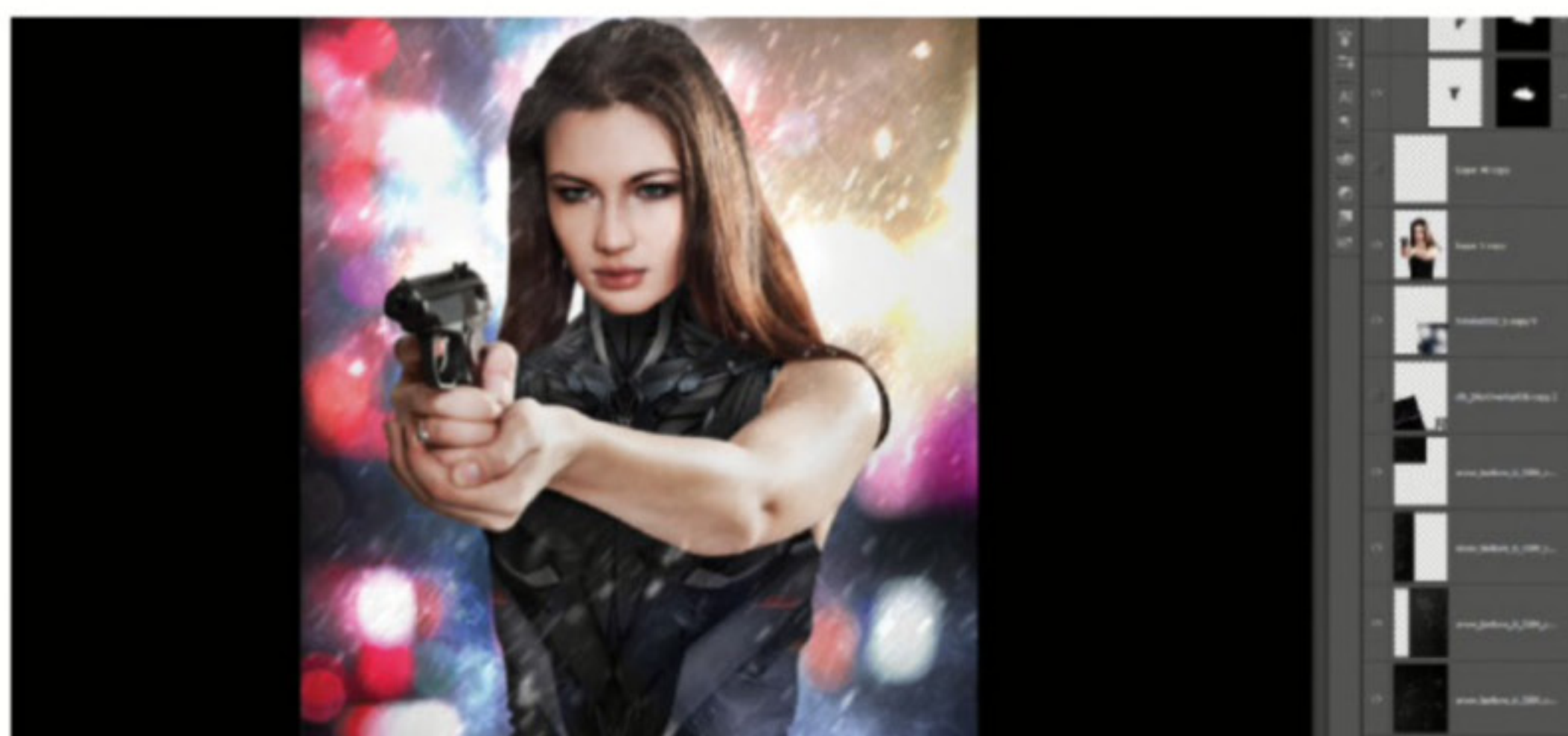
The sketch is done, and right now it's time to make the actual suit. Superbike parts are the best stock to create a futuristic suits or robots or anything from the future thanks to their slick designs. Grab our PNG files with the bike parts already cut out. On this part you can be as creative as you can but keep in mind that the suit needs to be practical. Our model's hand is in the foreground, so we need to create a mask so that the suit will appear to be behind the hand. To do that, we will select the Pen tool and repeat Step 1. When the selection is on, select the bike part that will be behind the hand and click the Mask button below on the Layers palette, then you can duplicate the mask by holding Shift and dragging the mask to another layer.



07 | ADD SHADOWS

For now, the suit looks too flat, so add some shadows for some depth and realism in the scene. Grab our Soft Round brush again. If you have a pen tablet you can create the shadows using the brush pressure feature, but if you don't have a tablet, you can play with the brush opacity to get more control over it. Now create a new layer below the part where you want to paint the shadow, for example, on areas like the neck and under her arms.

■ QUICK TIP
When designing something you always need to have an idea or sketch; don't come up with something on the spot unless you're really confident about your designing skills. Also, when designing a suit with superbike parts, make sure to study the shapes very well. Combining two or three parts can be very useful.



08 | RAIN EFFECTS

It's time to add some motion to bring more dynamism to our piece. This part is very similar to Step 4. Create rain by using snow textures. Take the snow texture by Moosplauze on [deviantart.com](https://www.deviantart.com/moosplauze), place it below the model layer and above the bokeh and smoke layers, go to Image>Adjustments>Curves, create a point in the middle and drag it down to make the snow particles sharper, then change the blend mode to Color Dodge, and go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur and set the angle to 32, and Distance to 31 and click OK. Then we need to blend the model, so duplicate the rain layer and place it above the model layer, and change the blend mode to Linear Dodge (Add) and mask areas like the face. Also take a snow texture without Motion Blur, create a mask, invert it, Cmd/Ctrl+I and paint back areas on the head and shoulder to make an interaction effect.

ENHANCE AND ADJUST

TWEAK COLOURS AND IMAGE ELEMENTS TO GET THE REQUIRED EFFECT

09 MODIFY HAIR

It's time to modify the model's hair to make it more unique. Create a mask so as not to go over the borders, select the model layer, hold Cmd/Ctrl and click on the layer, it will give you a selection. Next create a new layer above and click on the Mask button below in the Layers palette. Now change the layer's blend mode to Overlay, and with a Round brush and a red colour, paint over the hair. Her original hair colour is brown, so the red shouldn't look artificial.

Next we need to add details, so select the Brush tool (it is necessary for this step to have a pen tablet) with a small Round brush, hold Alt to select the Eye Dropper, select the colour you want and draw the hair as shown on the image.

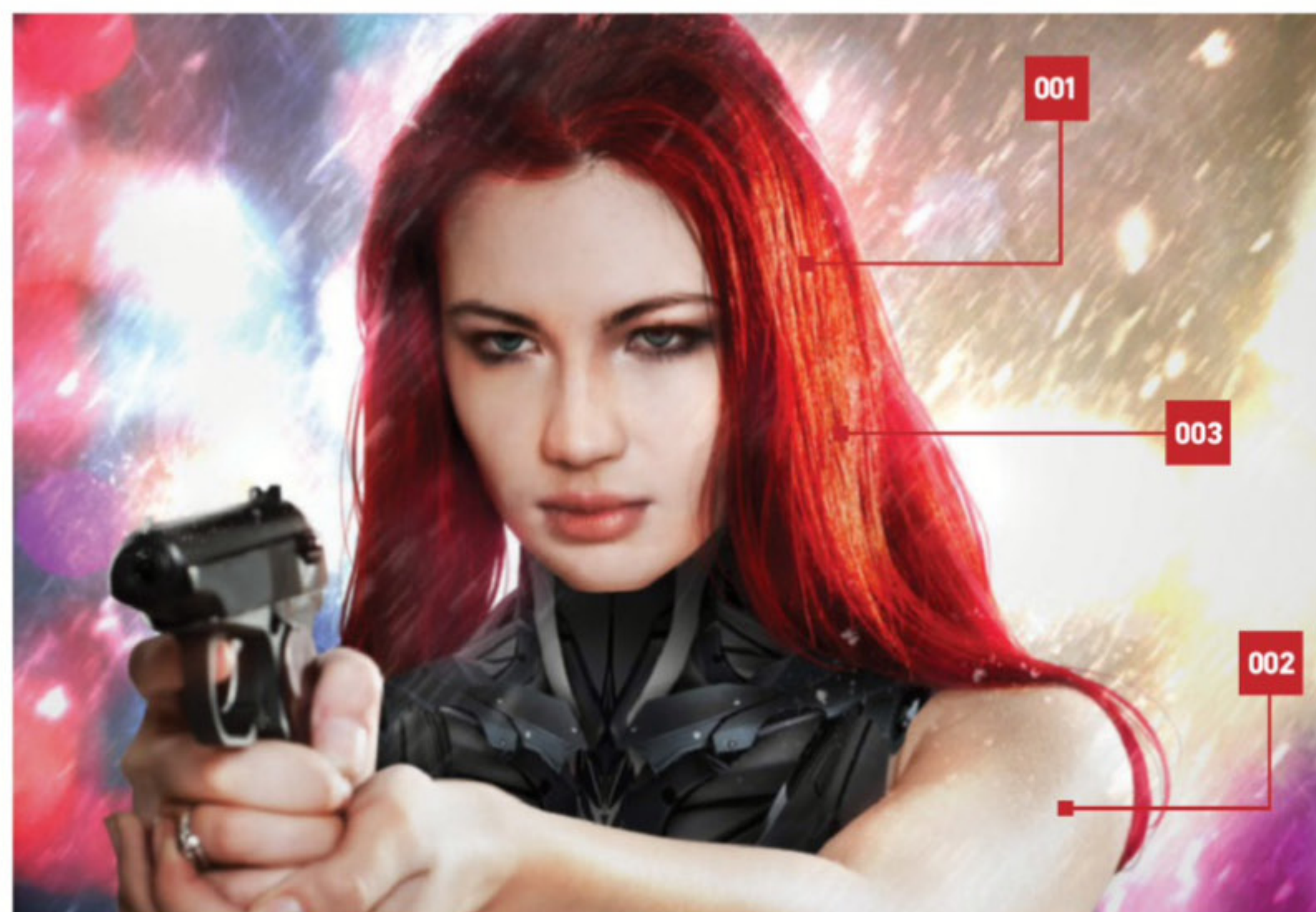
And finally create another layer, drag the hair colour mask to it, change the blend mode to Linear Dodge (Add) and by using a light red and Soft brush, paint the edges to create an effect of SSS (sub surface scattering).



10 ADJUSTING VALUES

Now we need to adjust the values. Since our background is bright and is our light source, our model should be dark because the light can't reach her. Only bounce light is illuminating her, so grab a selection of our model by holding Cmd/Ctrl and click on the layer, then create a new one above and fill it with black using the Paint Bucket tool and then use Cmd/Ctrl+D to release the selection. Turn down layer opacity to 15% and create a mask and paint areas like the face and hands to make them more visible, then duplicate the layer. Right-click on the layer, select Duplicate Layer, delete the mask, change Opacity to 24% and blend mode to Overlay.

“Since our background is bright and is our light source, our model should be dark because the light can't reach her, only bounce light is illuminating her”



001 | COLOUR

For a successful change of colour, your original hair should always be light; if dark, the Overlay filter will not work

002 | DIGITAL PAINTING

Adding a touch of digital painting to photomanipulations is always a plus

003 | REALISM

The SSS effect in hair gives more realism, but use it only according to your light source



11 LIGHT EFFECTS

It's time to add light effects. It's important to add some abstract lighting effects to your scene to give it more life, so grab the cosmic lights PNG pack textures from psdbox.com. Take '16 neutron collision', place it as shown on the image and press Cmd/Ctrl+U and change the Hue Slider to make it blue, then change the blend mode to Screen. Next, we will add a lens flare effect, also from the psdbox.com optical flares pack. Take any lens flare type you like and place it on the brightest spot of the background and change the blend mode to Screen and turn down Opacity to 60%.

12 MORE EFFECTS

Now add some more effects on the suit. This step is pretty easy, so let's create a new layer, grab a small Hard brush with light blue and change the blend mode to Linear Dodge (Add), and draw some lines as shown. Then click on the FX button next to the Mask button and select Outer Glow and make these modifications: Blend mode, Linear Dodge (Add); Opacity: 75; Noise: 0; Colour: 71b7e8; Technique: SSofter; Size: 38.

13 ABSTRACT SHAPES

Add surrealism to a piece to make it more artistic and eye-catching, instead of just creating a scene from a movie. So make a new layer and with the Polygonal Lasso tool, create triangular shapes around the model. When creating a shape, it will automatically be selected. With a soft brush, press Alt to select a colour with the Eye Dropper and paint the triangle. Repeat this process until you get an effect that works with the composition.

STORYLINE ELEMENTS

ADD ENERGY SHIELDS AND OTHER STORYLINE SIGNIFIERS



14 | CREATE THE ENERGY SHIELD
Create a new document, make it around 2000 pixels, then select the Polygon tool, set the sides to three, choose a blue colour for the Fill, and no Stroke, then hold Shift and click and drag to create a triangle shape. Now duplicate and flip the triangle by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+T, right-click and choose Flip Vertical, then arrange the triangles for a good composition. Repeat this step again but this time without Fill and the Stroke set to 5px.

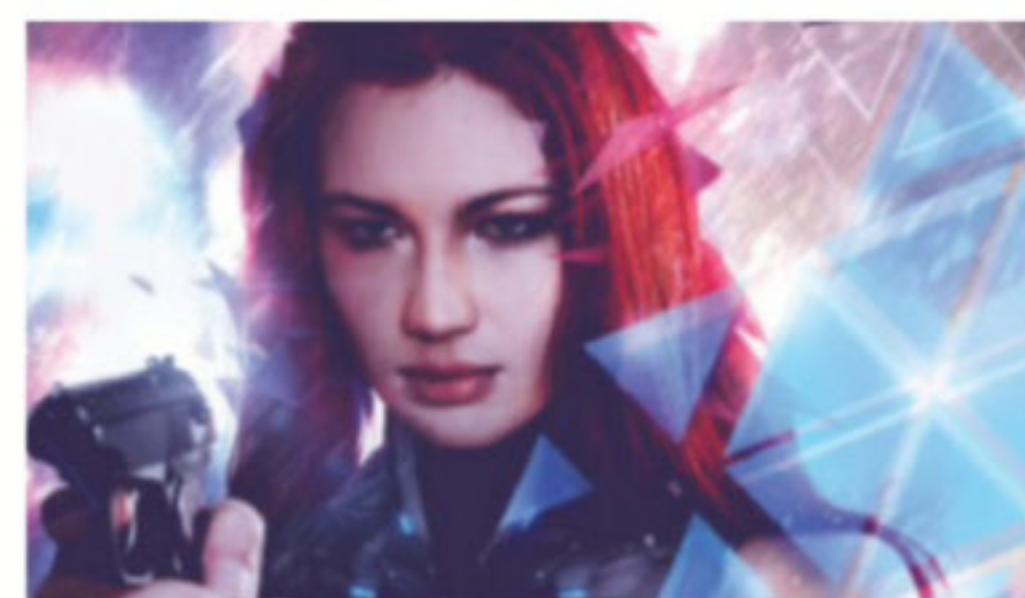
17 | COLOUR CORRECTION
Our illustration is basically finished, all that's left are the finishing touches. Let's add some adjustment layers first to bring some cool tones to our piece. In the Layers palette next to the Mask button, click on the Adjustment Layer button and select Gradient Map. Set the Color Pickers to: Left picker: 1f0c03 Right picker: acdfff. Set the adjustment layer to Hard Light and turn down the Opacity to 20%. Next select Colour Correction and set it to the following: Midtones: 1st slider: -17, 2nd slider: -3, 3rd slider: +28, Shadows: 1st slider: 0, 2nd slider: -28, 3rd slider: +20, highlights: 1st slider: -10, 2nd slider: 0, 3rd slider: +20. Next add another Gradient Map: set the blend mode to Lighten and left picker colour: 220545 and right picker to black. And finally select Exposure and set the middle slider to: 0.0165.



15 | PLACE THE ENERGY SHIELD
Now that the shield is done, it's time to apply it to our canvas, so select all the triangle layers, right-click and select Merge Layers, then hit Cmd/Ctrl+C and on the canvas hit Cmd/Ctrl+V. Next hit Cmd/Ctrl+T and by holding the Shift key, distort the triangles to make them look in perspective. Now turn the Opacity down to 60% and duplicate the layer. In the new layer hit Cmd/Ctrl+U and play with the sliders until you get a darker blue, then change the blend mode to Linear Dodge (Add). And finally duplicate again, hit Cmd/Ctrl+U and make the blue lighter, change the blend Mode to Hard Light and move it over a little bit, and finally go to Filters>Blur>Motion Blur, Angle: 20 and Distance: 30.

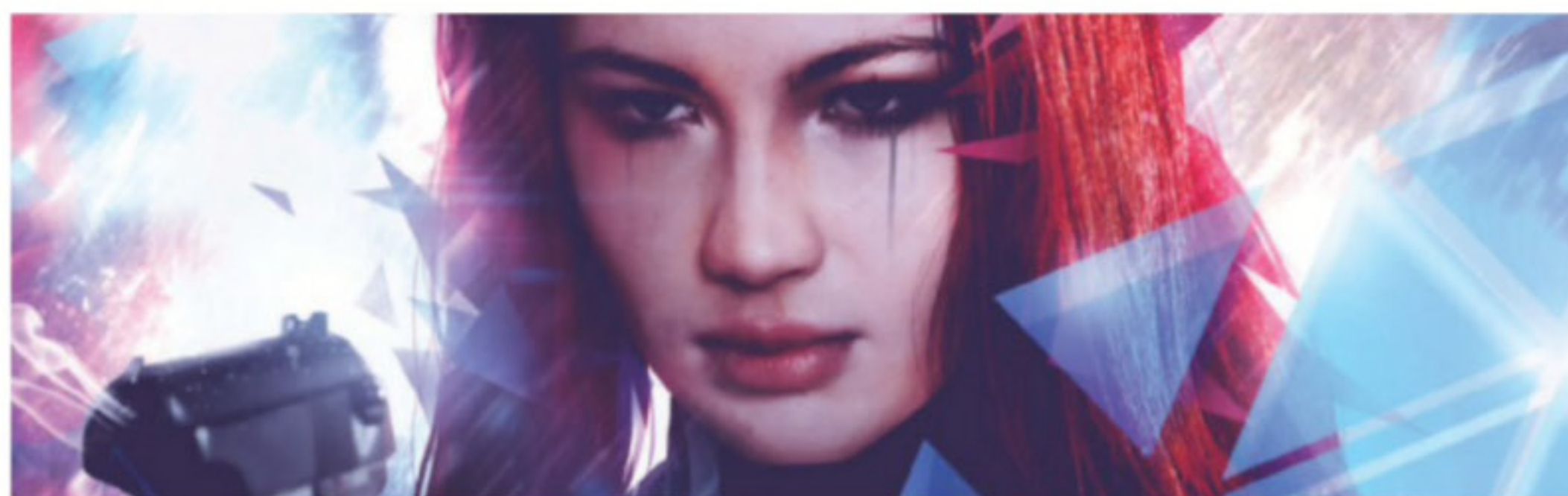


16 | STORY ELEMENTS
Our photomanipulation is nearly done, so finish it by adding some story elements. Here we added tears, and smoke coming out of the gun, as if she just killed someone she cared about that betrayed her. So for this step we will use smoke brushes and watercolour brushes – you can find free brushes like this on deviantART or any resource site on the internet. Select a watercolour brush, choose a black colour and apply it on the eyes as shown, then erase any unwanted parts. Next select a smoke brush, choose a white colour and apply it on the tip of the gun.



PHOTOMANIPULATION

In order to do great photomanipulations, you need to have a great photo library. Here are some great sites to gather the best stock photos and resources: deviantart.com, cgtextures.com, psdbox.com, mediamilitia.com. It is a great thing to have good photomanipulation skills because it's not only used to create illustration for books or music, but it is a great tool to use in concept art for the film industry, because it needs to look as realistic as possible.



18 | FINAL EFFECTS
Make sure all your elements are in place and everything is set out properly, then right-click on any layer and hit Flatten Image, this will merge all layers into one. For the final effects apply Smart Sharpen, Lens Correction and Noise. Start with Smart Sharpen, go to Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen, set the amount to 150 and Radius to 1.0px. Next go to Filter>Lens Correction. In the Custom panel on the Chromatic Aberration slider, set the 1st slider to +50.00, 2nd slider to -30.16 and 3rd slider to -75.40. Finally, finish the tutorial by going to Filter>Noise>Add Noise, set the amount to 2.45, Distribution: Uniform and check Monochromatic. Your composite is complete and thanks to blend modes, packs some awesome effects!

QUICK TIP

For a piece of artwork to be truly great, it is important that you are telling the viewer a story. Artwork with a story is always far better than an emotionless piece of work.

Learn in style



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MISS

“ I collected these box-top paintings of ships and planes and it always fascinated me how these painters achieved action and adventure in these little masterpieces ”

© Jack Meik



LOVE & WAR

JACK MOIK

FIND OUT HOW ILLUSTRATOR JACK MOIK CREATED A WORLD WAR II PIN-UP EMERGING FROM THE ARTWORK ON A PLANE

Since my childhood I've been a huge fan of model kit box art from painters like Roy Cross or Roy Huxley, to name two very gifted UK artists," explains German illustrator Jack Moik (www.artofjack.com). "I collected these box-top paintings of ships and planes and it always fascinated me how these painters achieved action and adventure in these little masterpieces. At the same time I'm a fan of

Sorayama's art and his wonderful skills of capturing female beauty. I wondered how I could marry these two different styles, so I came up with the idea to make a warbird pin-up come to life. I started with a pretty rough kind of layout to find the right angle, colours and mood. That took me about three hours. After that, I resized the layout to the desired size, which is often about 6400x4100pix.

"The biggest problem with this painting was that the legs of the woman are painted on the plane but the torso, arms and face should come out of it three dimensionally.

"After experimenting with different colours, hues and light I realised that it might work if I put some panel lines, dirt, rust and scratches over her painted legs to make it more connected to the plane."

01 | LAYOUT AND DESIGN

This is the first layout, done in three hours. I used just five layers, so it was much easier to play around with and find the right angle and colours. For the man I used a reference photo from a friend, which I took spontaneously. I also had some reference for the woman, but painted most parts from my mind as there was no exact reference available.

02 | COMPOSITIONAL CHANGES

I also had some references for the P-38 Lightning plane, but they didn't all match, so I used a little die-cast model to find the right angle. Then I changed the positions of characters, hands and brush, adding more details to clothing, hair and airplane. I made the corners and plane darker and added more light on the characters.



03 | ALL IN THE DETAILS

Almost there, [I added] more panel lines and patina on the plane, changed the hairstyle on her and painted a lot more detail overall. Detailing is the most time consuming [part of] my work, I must admit; I'm addicted to details so the last ten hours was meticulous work on patina, hair and folds. I tried to give her hairstyle a slightly Forties look, but it looks too plain for my taste. So finally I made it a bit more timeless, as this shouldn't be a historic piece, rather it's a daydream.





Draw on your iPad: Adobe Ink & Slide is a stylus and ruler package for precision drawing on your Pad using Adobe's Line, Sketch and Draw CC apps

ADOBE INK & SLIDE

ADOBE'S FIRST HARDWARE PRODUCT HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN YOUR MOBILE WORKFLOW AND PHOTOSHOP, BUT HOW DOES IT MEASURE UP?

www.adobe.com/uk/products/ink-and-slide.html

\$124.99

Adobe's Creative Cloud packages have been making ever-larger inroads into the mobile space, but this latest product is a first for the company. It marks Adobe's first move into branded hardware, with a stylus and ruler combo designed for the iPad. The move into hardware can be a potentially risky strategy for any software developer, even one as large and well-regarded as Adobe, but it has wisely partnered with experts in the field to deliver a product that more than lives up to the quality

expected from anything that bears the Adobe marque. That product is Ink & Slide.

Developed in conjunction with iPad stylus wizards Adonit – famous for revolutionising the unwieldy, first-generation iPad stylus into a tool that can rival a Wacom pen – Ink & Slide leverages Adonit's PixelPoint technology, which offers the ability to make the stylus nib smaller, allowing for greater drawing precision, and makes use of the iPad's accelerometer and capacitive screen, and a

tactile material for the pen nib, to mimic the feeling of the pressure-sensitivity that a serious digital art workflow requires. Adonit isn't the only partner lending its creative genius to Ink & Slide either – the design was developed in conjunction with studio Ammunition, responsible for designing some of the iconic Beats headphones range. This means that not only does Ink & Slide look good and feel comfortable and responsive to use, but it works intuitively and smoothly as well.



A first for Adobe: This sleek package is Adobe's first foray into branded hardware



Use CC apps: Ink & Slide is primarily designed for use with Adobe's CC apps

■ LINKING WITH CC APPS

Typically for Adobe's joined-up Creative Cloud strategy, Ink & Slide works with a range of CC apps to enhance both your drawing experience and the ways that you can use the content you've created. You can draw and sketch with Ink & Slide using Adobe Line, Adobe Sketch and Adobe Draw. Ink & Slide can also make use of colour palettes you've captured in Adobe Color (formerly Kuler), and import and export assets you've made in other CC apps via the Cloud Clipboard. You will need a Creative Cloud membership to fully access and share files between the apps that Ink & Slide makes use of, but this means that you'll also be able to import the content you've created straight into your CC Library in Photoshop. If you have the full CC plan, you'll also be able to use them in other Creative Cloud desktop programs such as Illustrator CC. For those who have been resisting the pull of the Creative Cloud, the ease of combining a mobile and desktop workflow may be a deciding factor when it comes to taking the plunge and signing up for the subscription-based service.



Slide: The digital ruler makes lines easier to draw and can be used with Shape and Line to create more complex shapes

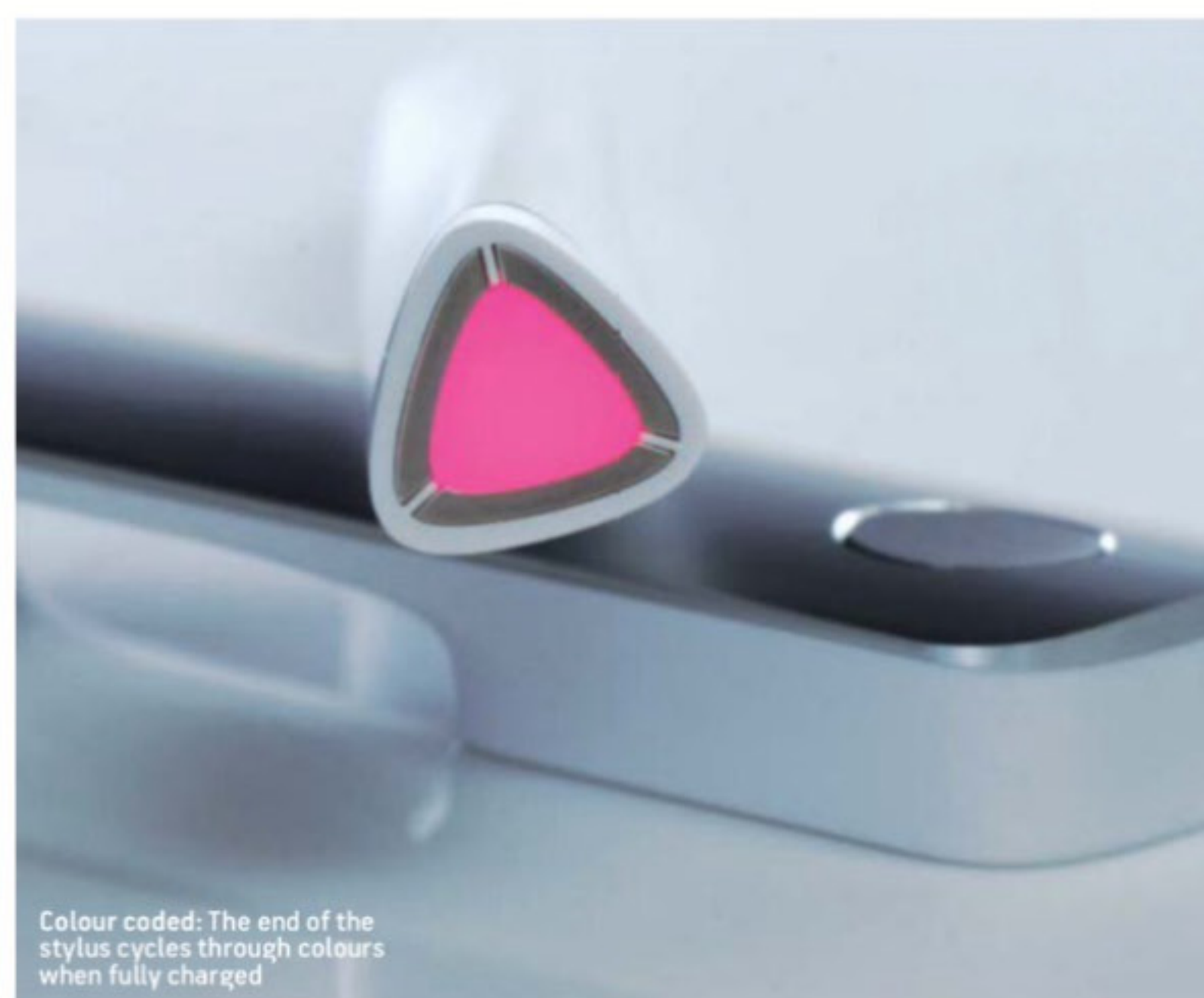
► The Ink & Slide stylus is ergonomically designed in a triangular shape (similar to a high-end artist's pencil), which makes it comfortable to hold and control for long periods of time. The shape is offset so that it twists, making it ultra-controllable, and it's made of lightweight hydro-formed aluminium, adding a smooth aesthetic to the elegant design and ensuring that it's not too heavy. And there's a nice little feature at both ends of the pen too – both the

stylus and the end light up. You can change the colour you'd like the stylus nib to be in the settings (ideal if you're working in a studio environment and several of your colleagues have Ink & Slides, as you can tell which one belongs to whom by sight), while the end, when fully charged, cycles through a full spectrum of colour. It's a little thing, but it looks awesomely cool.

Slide is described as a digital ruler, although 'stencil' might actually be nearer the mark, as it's

not for measuring but for drawing a range of lines and shapes. Anyone who's ever tried drawing a straight line or a French curve on an iPad will know how difficult this can be, so Slide is certainly designed to fill a much-needed gap in a mobile artist's workflow. Unlike Ink it's battery-free, and relies on the iPad recognising its capacitive feet (which have magnets in them) to accurately draw shapes and lines through the three drawing apps associated with it.

“The shape is offset so that it twists, making it ultra-controllable, and it’s made of lightweight hydro-formed aluminium, adding a smooth aesthetic to the elegant design”



The million-dollar question, then, is whether Ink & Slide is a must-have or whether it’s a cool but highly priced gimmick. Ultimately your opinion on this will have to factor in how you use Photoshop. If you rarely use Adobe’s mobile creative apps and your Photoshop work is predicated on image editing, compositing or photomanipulation, Ink & Slide isn’t necessarily for you. If on the other hand you’re a digital artist who primarily uses Photoshop for digital painting, and you frequently sketch on the move and then import your creations into Photoshop for further work, then Ink & Slide could be a valuable addition to your Adobe toolkit. The stylus is one of the best iPad drawing tools we’ve ever tested, and the novel ‘ruler’ makes shape-

based drawing tasks that are normally a pain on the iPad much more fluent and fluid. If you want to go the whole hog and have a nose-to-tail CC workflow, then you could start with the Adobe Smart Notebook, begin your digital process with Ink & Slide and then import the lot into Photoshop to be finished off.

It’s worth noting too that Ink will work as a stylus in other drawing apps (like Sketchbook Pro or Sketch Club), but you will sacrifice some of its best features, like palm rejection, pen pressure and obviously CC connectivity. On the flipside though, the release of the Adobe Creative SDK means that independent developers may soon start creating support, or additional apps, for Ink & Slide.

VERDICT

Features: **8/10**
Ease of use: **10/10**
Quality of results: **9/10**
Value for money: **7/10**

FINAL SCORE: 9/10

BUILDING A VISION

ARCHITECTURAL VISUALISATION REQUIRES A SOLID BASE OF KNOWLEDGE AS WELL AS ARTISTIC VISION, BUT BELGRADE'S RENDERUS – AND LEAD ARTIST MARKO STOJKOVIC – IS CARVING OUT AN IMPRESSIVE NICHE

Arch-vis, or architectural visualisation, is increasingly becoming a buzzword among Photoshop artists. Once solely the province of 3D artists, Photoshop's texturing and lighting capabilities have seen it join its 3D brethren as a key part of the art of making concept designs for buildings look amazing. We caught up with reader Marko Stojkovic, founder and lead artist at Renderus, to find out more about his inspirational work.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU USE PHOTOSHOP FOR?

I've been using it for more than ten years, and the period of making CGI visualisations without Photoshop I call 'The Middle Ages'. Five years ago, discovering the potency of Photoshop in CGI creation was a true renaissance for me. Since then, besides V-Ray, Photoshop has become my second render engine.

HOW DID YOU ORIGINALLY GET INTO 3D?

While I was in elementary school, my parents bought me the book *3D Studio Max F/X* by John A Bell. The attraction to videogames and the admiration for virtual

worlds ignited the spark that made me start learning the 3D craft. Today, I mainly use 3ds Max, V-Ray and Photoshop but I'm also proficient in Rhino, Grasshopper and After Effects.

HOW DID YOU TRANSLATE THAT INTEREST INTO WORKING PROFESSIONALLY?

It was during my architectural studies in Belgrade that I started making architectural visualisation. As I was greatly influenced by that experience I decided to pursue my career as an architect and a CGI artist. After five years of work in an architectural office, I founded my own studio, Renderus. Together with a small team I'm forging our particular CGI style and striving to create unique architectural visualisations.

WHAT IT IS ABOUT ARCHITECTURAL VISUALISATION THAT EXCITES YOU?

I aim to show the quality of architecture and to hide its flaws, although it's very exciting to turn the flaws into an advantage. Another challenge in architectural visualisation is to create an alluring effect that will



OUR READER
MARKO STOJKOVIC
www.renderus.com
@renderus



The Shopping Mall:
"By introducing a bungee jump, a coffee shop and a circus onto the rooftop through postproduction, the Atrium becomes the beacon of the mall," says Stojkovic

All article images © Marko Stojkovic



Coldstream Gallery: Stojkovic says this personal image was to practise "post-production skills. The main building is a 3D model and the rest of the image was manipulated in Photoshop"

“I'd like to describe my current style as realism spiced with a dose of utopianism, so you can call it an upgraded reality with the elements of an idealistic society”

Pervolia Beach Villas: "Displaying the crystal blue sea, white sand, swaying palms and a beautiful backyard," Stojkovic says this work for Prime Property Group evokes the sense of serenity and tranquil lifestyle





The Shopping Mall: Adding the swarm of shoppers streaming into the mall, the challenge was to emphasise the vastness of the mall and to make the images look more dynamic," says Stojkovic of his work for Portner

Coastal Park Residence: In this piece for Prime Property Group, Stojkovic says "the challenge was to show it as a part of urban surroundings but yet to keep its Mediterranean spirit by creating the fresh sunny mood"



► transport the observer into the object, and to provide enough space for the observer to act and interfere with the design in order to evoke his or her imagination and emotions.

SO HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

As my style is a dynamic category and evolves constantly, I can describe it only as my 'current' style. Since style is a language, it requires constant development, practice and interactive communication; therefore my visualisation style is a product of communication with the clients, the forging of the message that they want to convey to their customers. I'd like to describe my current style as realism spiced with a dose of utopianism, so you can call it an upgraded reality with the elements of an idealistic society.

WHAT'S A TYPICAL WORKDAY FOR YOU?

Usually I get up early, filled with hope and convinced that I'm going to work eight hours that day! Unfortunately, these dreams disperse like dust in the wind, because my working day often lasts until late in the evening. As the owner of the studio and an artist, I need to take care of the CGI work as well as marketing and financial issues. This can drain me out and requires a lot of time, but I get great support from my girlfriend Sanya Ivanovic and I'm convinced that I wouldn't be able to run the studio without her effort.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE PHOTOSHOP TOOLS OR FEATURES?

I could talk for ages about this, but I'll single out just three of my favourites. One; layer masks. Combined with layer management, this feature gives you total control of your image workflow. Preserving and controlling the layer transparency level, the mask is the most essential feature in Photoshop, and what makes



Casa F Family house: This personal work sees Stojkovic create rays of light breaking through the stormy backdrop, so "the house is shown in [a] sunrise fantasy mood"

DESIGN TIPS

MARKO STOJKOVIC'S WORK HAS INCREDIBLE DETAIL AND VISION. HE EXPLAINS HIS APPROACH

"My professor once said that making architecture is like cooking, and I'd like to use this analogy in CGI visualisation using three key concepts."

- **REALITY:** Like a good dish created from top quality groceries, the image must look real. Try to make the materials look as real as possible in order to get a solid architectural visualisation.
- **STORY:** In top restaurants, storytelling is the key. Similarly, a good image needs to be founded on storytelling, so try to make the image alive by adding dynamic elements or experimenting with different atmospheric moods.
- **EFFECT:** Lastly, you need to spice up the dish, to give it a kick, so zest the image with some special effects, or unexpected elements. Be careful though, if you add too much or too little salt, you could ruin the whole dish.

“ Sometimes, [Actions] decide if I make it home for dinner or not. From making shadows of the crowd to mass adjustments for multiple layers, the Action feature is a lifesaver ”

it awesome is the simplicity of use. Two; Actions. Sometimes, this feature decides if I make it home for dinner or not. From making shadows of the crowd to mass adjustments for multiple layers, the Action feature is a lifesaver and I don't hesitate to use it in every possible situation in order to save hours of work.

Three; brushes. By being the extension of your arm in virtual space and giving you the freedom of drawing, the brush is the most vital feature, which basically allows you to become the Creator in Photoshop. Since I use a drawing board, the brush is an inseparable Photoshop feature for me.



Poluostrov Family House: This work, for Portner, shows a "family house located in the Russian wilderness. The key challenge was to display the modern architecture nestled in the woods but yet close to the amenities of modern life"

GATHER THE PROJECT MATERIALS

MATERIALS YOU CAN USE TO CREATE A GRUNGE TEXTURE EFFECT

Watercolour paint: Watercolour is the best type of paint for textures because it's transparent enough to blend well once in Photoshop

Coffee grounds: Half a cup of coffee grounds with some water left in them, for producing aged, grungy effects

Paper: For these two methods you'll need two types of paper, watercolour paper because it's thick and has a texture and white paper or newsprint because it crinkles easily

Watercolour brush: A watercolour brush holds lots of liquid and therefore will give a good area of coverage

VINTAGE GRUNGE TEXTURES

LEARN HOW TO CREATE VINTAGE TEXTURES FOR ADDING DEPTH AND AGE TO YOUR ARTWORK

Grunge textures are a common way of adding visual interest to a design or layout. In an industry dominated by pixel-perfect digital designs, adding in a bit of chaos can be an attractive element that makes your design stand out. Using textures that tend to have a dirty, aged look

also brings a sense of the real world into the pristine digital landscape.

In this project, we will show you two great techniques for crafting grungy textures with real materials that you probably already have in your house. Then we show you how to digitise them and

incorporate your own textures into some digital design projects. The very act of making a bit of a mess in such a perfect world can be quite fun. You may find yourself adding a bit of grunge to every design just as a way to break free of those perfect pixel chains!

CREATE VINTAGE WATERCOLOUR TEXTURES

USING WATERCOLOUR PAINTS TO CREATE A USABLE TEXTURE



01 | LOAD YOUR BRUSH

Start by dipping your brush in water then rub it around in black watercolour paint. There will be a lot of paint in your brush but the watercolour paper absorbs a lot of water so it will even out.



02 | PAINT THE TEXTURE

Using the side of the brush, cover an area with paint. Experiment with different amounts of paint and using a more dry brush to create different textures. Let paint pool in some places and drop paint in the pools to create blooms.



03 | SCAN THE TEXTURES

Scan your paper once it's dry. Next, isolate sections that go together as individual textures. Watercolours can be found relatively cheaply, so you can create a large stash of textures.

COFFEE TEXTURE

HOW TO MAKE A GRUNGY TEXTURE WITH COFFEE



01 | CRUMPLE IT UP

Start with a piece of newsprint. Newsprint is non-archival and is super cheap and also super fragile so textures made with it look extra grungy. Crumple the paper and then unfold it to reveal the beginnings of a grungy texture.



02 | STAIN

Using a paint brush and the wet coffee grounds, paint over the paper. Experiment with using more water or more coffee grounds in different places. Follow the crinkle lines for more varied textures.



03 | LET IT DRY

Without moving the paper, let it dry. You can use a hairdryer as well to speed drying. If you use a hairdryer, use it on low so the coffee grounds don't blow around and make a mess.

▶ TEXTURES FOR LOGOS

COMPONENTS OF A GOOD LOGO TEXTURE

Making vintage textures for logos is different from making vintage textures for use on photographs. You'll need to be aware of smaller details and legibility of the text.

A variety of transitions are important in a logo texture because it allows the words to fade in and out smoothly, which helps legibility

When you make textures, make sure you have some overlap of dark areas and light areas with both hard and soft edges. This way you can really fine tune in Photoshop to get the look you want

Have an image in your mind of the application of the texture you're making. Think about how vintage photos or signs look and where they fade

Combine grit and smoothness within designs to make the texture look more interesting. Keep the grittiness small so it doesn't overwhelm but use it sparingly to increase the grungy effect

VINTAGE LOGO

USE THE GRUNGE TEXTURES TO CREATE A VINTAGE STYLED LOGO

One of the most fun applications for these custom, grunge textures is for creating vintage logos with an aged, weathered effect. This becomes more than just a stylised effect as it gives further evidence of the age of the design. Any logo that was produced back in the Fifties was not done so

digitally. Therefore the physical productions would show some age and weathering.

As with the grunge layout, these textures are best used as individual layers utilising blending modes to create the textured effect. In the case of our logo, the effect works best when the

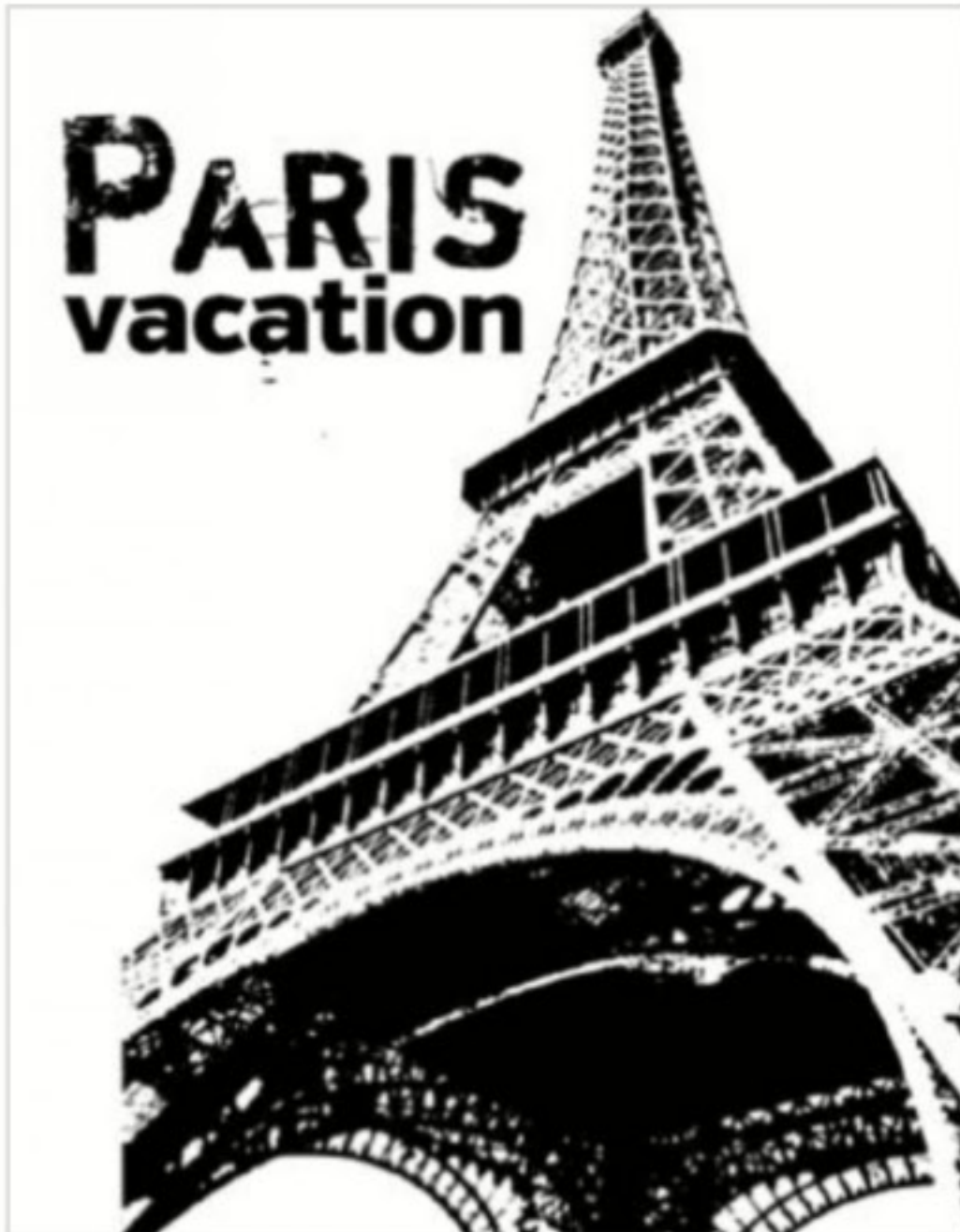
textures are desaturated first. Use layer masks to further control the specific application of the texture.

To see a step-by-step tutorial of how to create this logo and add the vintage textured effect, be sure to check out the video on the FileSilo as our expert walks you through the projects, click-by-click!



► ■ USING THE TEXTURES FOR LAYOUT ELEMENTS

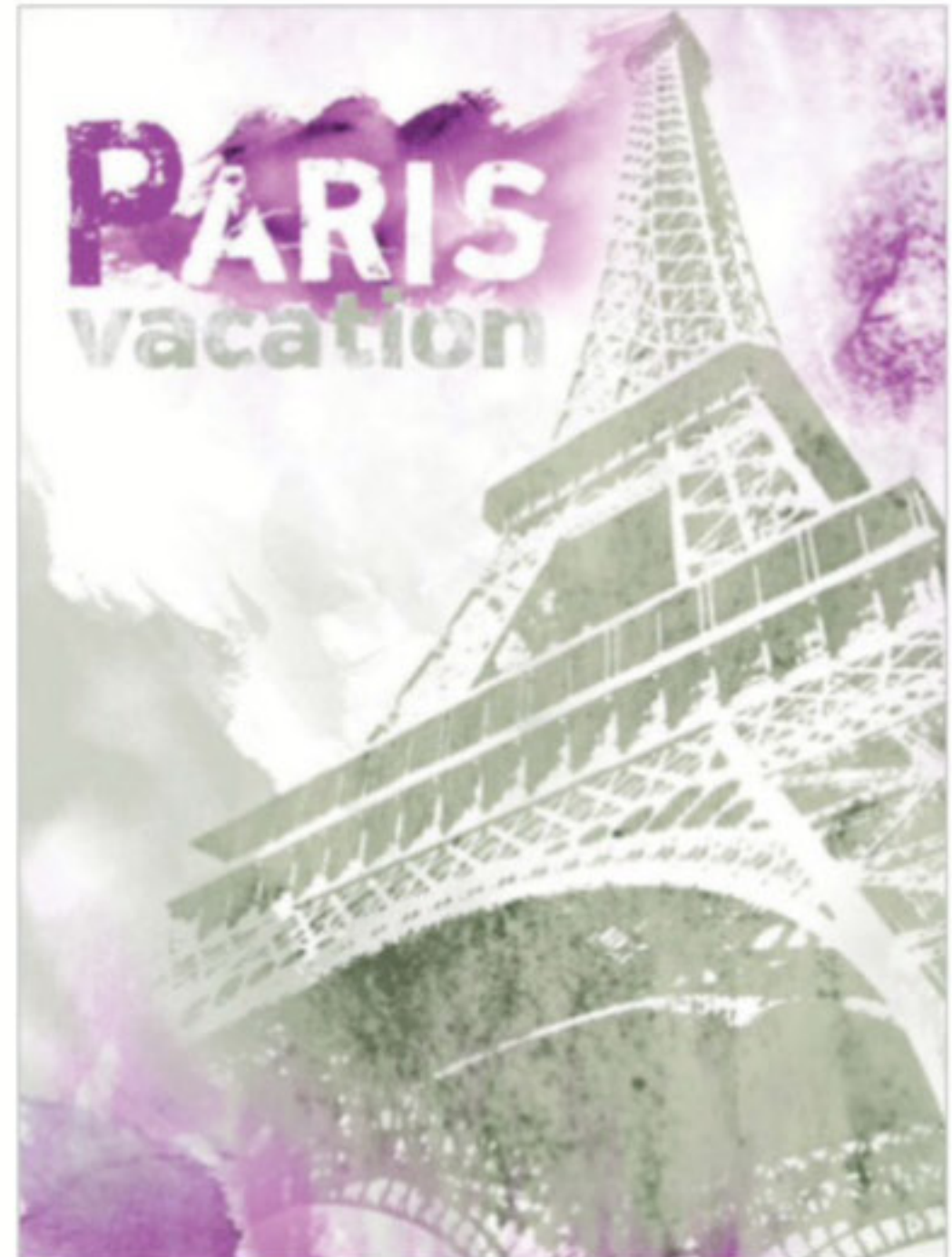
HOW TO MAKE EYE CATCHING VINTAGE EFFECTS USING THE GRUNGE TEXTURES



01 | START SIMPLE
Start with a simple black-and-white layout. Keep the shapes and visual elements simplistic and sharp for the best legibility. Adding small details and gradients just tends to muddy the overall design.



02 | CLIPPED GRUNGE TEXTURES
Add textures as a layer over each element. Then create the grunge effect by clipping the texture to each object layer and changing the blending mode to Overlay or Soft Light.



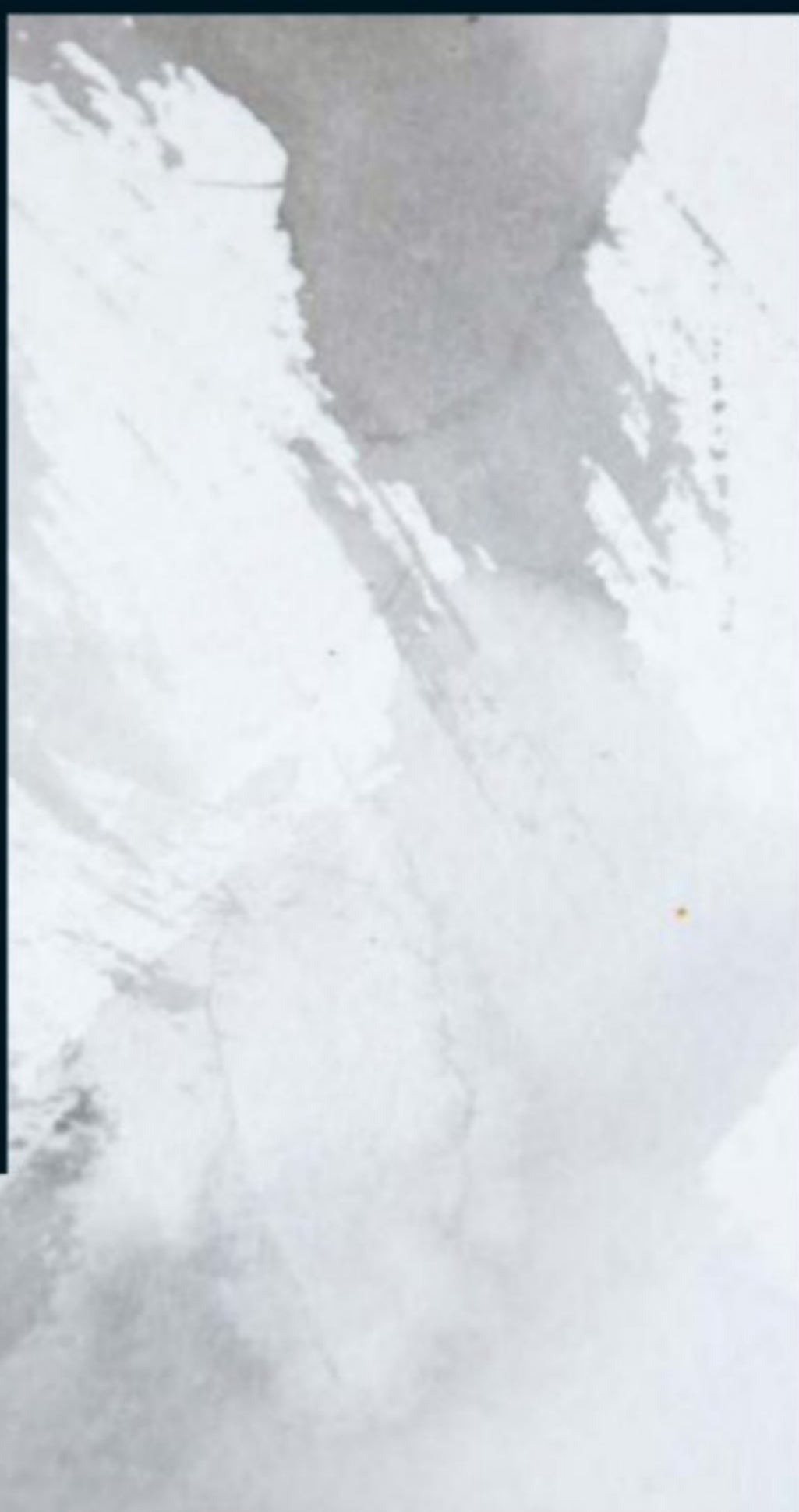
03 | FURTHER GRUNGE EFFECTS
Add in some of the grunge textures as simple layers using a blending mode. Also consider using the grunge textures in a layer mask on a solid colour layer to create a wonderfully colourful effect.



FileSiló

VINTAGE LOGO TEXTURES

Included are coffee and watercolour textures for application on logos, photo effects, or even as design elements in layouts. These are free for you to use in personal projects.

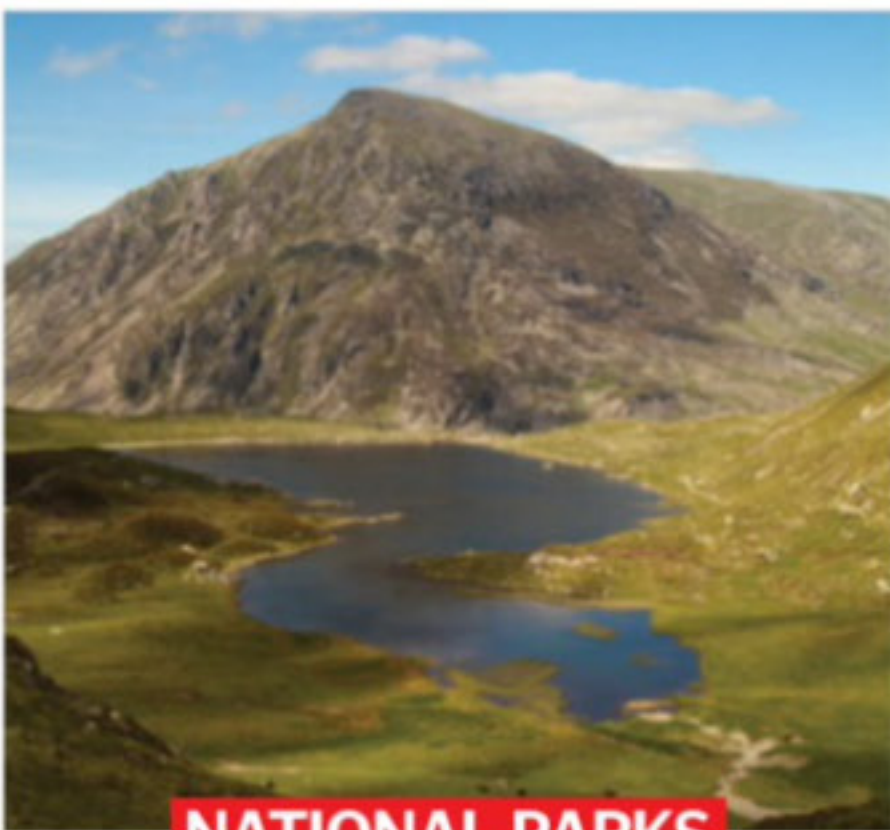


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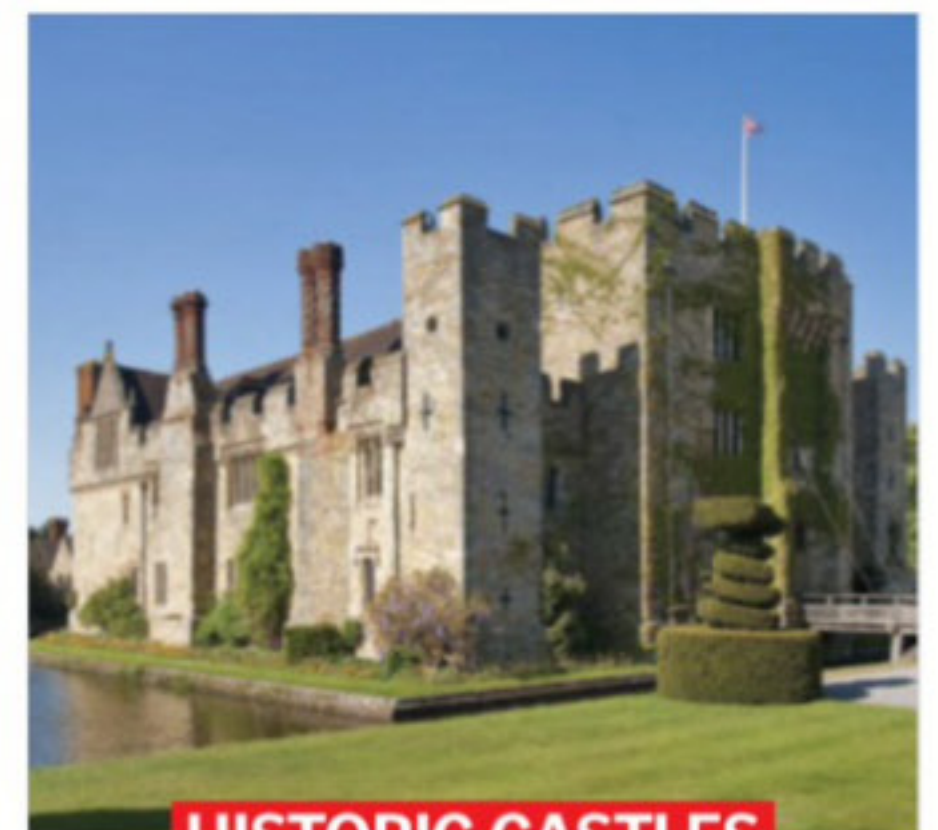
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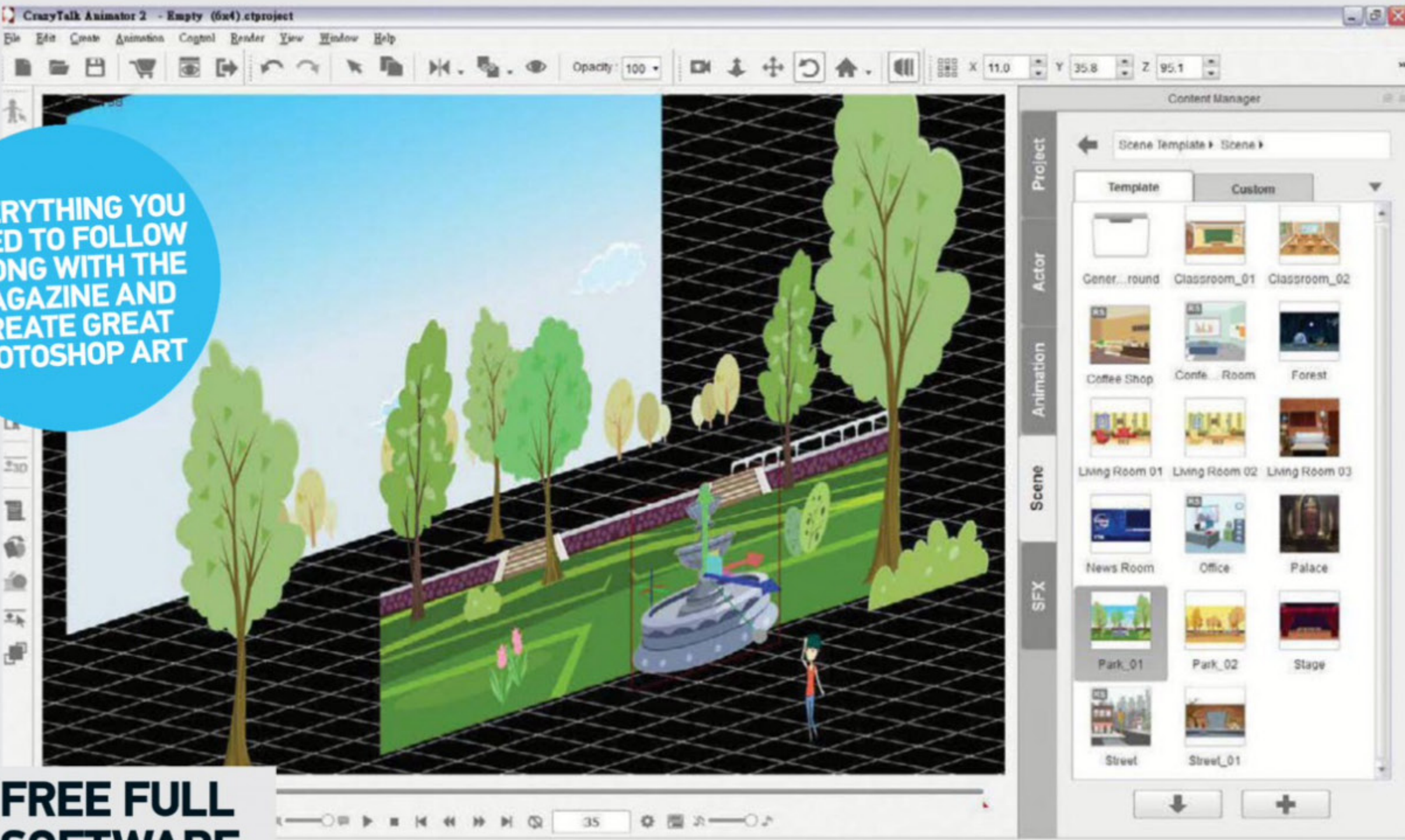
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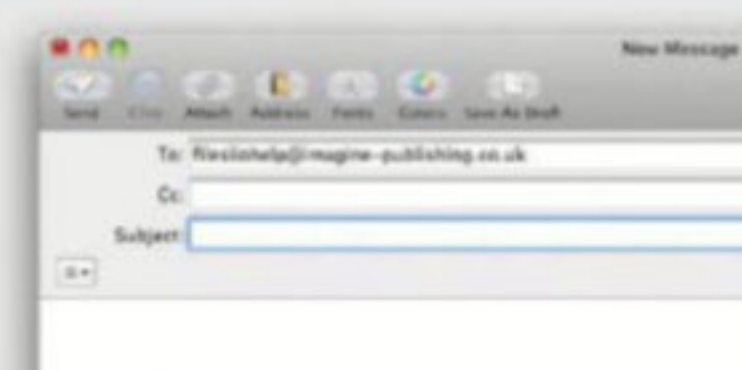


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